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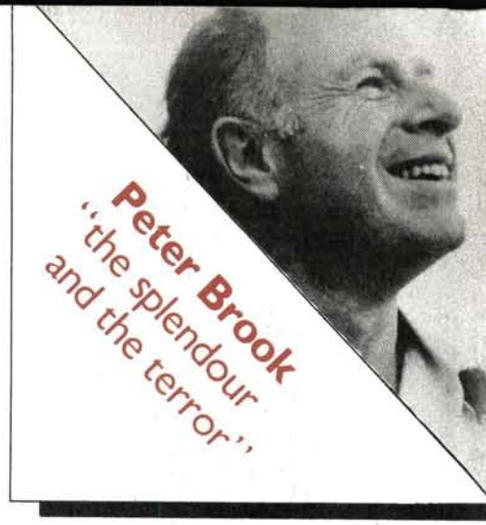
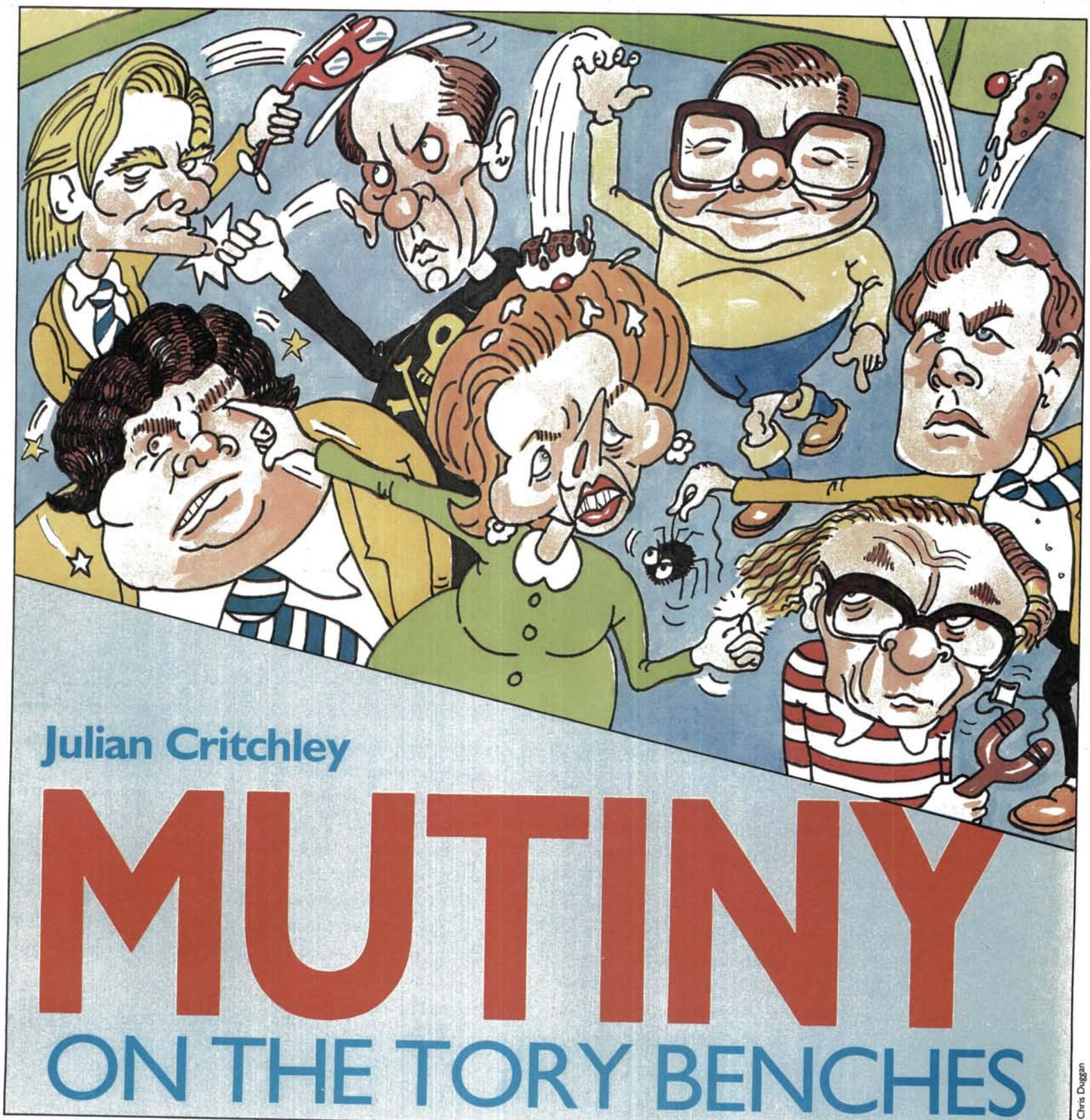
Paul Foot on the **Revolution**
Zola Budd on the run



Peter Brook
"the splendour and the terror"



Julian Critchley

MUTINY ON THE TORY BENCHES

Chris Duggan

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The survival of the weakest.

Not so long ago a child suffering from a condition like leukaemia would almost certainly die.

Thankfully, today things have changed.

Important advances have been achieved in the treatment of childhood cancers. Many children with leukaemia now make complete recoveries.

In fact, these days around a third of all people with cancers (adult and child) are cured.

The British pharmaceutical industry, working with universities, hospitals and charitably funded laboratories is striving to develop new and better medicines.

Experts believe that by the year 2000 around a half of all cancer cases will be curable. But this is a battle that medicines and surgery alone cannot win.

Your help is needed too. And the best way you can help is to help yourself.

Stop smoking and eat a balanced diet with plenty of fibre and not too much fat.

You'll significantly reduce your chances of getting cancer.

Together, prevention and improved treatments could make the threat of cancer seem just a thing of the past to this child's grandchildren.

THE BRITISH PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY.
HELPING TO KEEP BRITAIN HEALTHY.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 115 No 2978 22 April 1988

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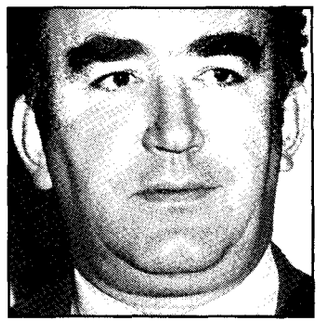
A bludgeon too far?



MRS THATCHER's visits to the tea rooms of the House of Commons and the libations of whisky dispensed by the whips are the rituals which accompany any authentic crisis in the Tory party machine. It had been clear for months that Monday night's vote on the poll tax would be the big one. When it came it was, for the party managers, about as bad as it could be.

It followed the outbreaks of dissent of the previous week on cuts in housing benefit and on the new health charges. The majority of 25 was all but universally seen as a gross humiliation. The organised barracking of Colonel Mates (above) demonstrated the odious vindictiveness of the loyalists. And if this were not enough, the vote coincided with the leaking of cabinet papers indicating how badly Ridley and the rest had deceived their own backbenchers.

The irony of all this is that Mates regarded himself as no rebel, and went on record as being "90 per cent" for the poll tax. Political managers who prove unable to hold off dissent like this must obviously be jittery.

Julian Critchley, on the other hand, who writes on page 10, delights in his self-appointed role as josher and jester to his leader. He writes as a traditional Tory. He has been voting against Mrs Thatcher since 1979. He was, too, the first in the party to break ranks, in February 1980, publicly but anonymously denouncing the new leadership in the Sunday press. For all his joviality his is also a forlorn voice, expressing the disenchantment of the Tory traditionalist with current times. Yet Critchley is far from unaware of the disarray currently preoccupying the Tories; he is peculiarly sensitive to the tribulations of nervous party whips; and he sees too the short-term difficulties of the Tory party in the longer perspective of the future struggle over the leadership. He asks if Mrs Thatcher is a Tory; he does not speculate on just how deep the current crisis runs.

Three years ago we published a piece from another dissident Tory, George Tremlett, which confidently predicted that "Thatcherism is beginning to crack" (*NS* 15 March 1985). This alone should remind us of the wisdom of caution. What is clear however is that after last year's election the Thatcherite leadership decided to steam ahead in the first year of the new government, forcing through as early as possible the unpopular legislation.

From 1979-81 the purpose was to Thatcherise the economy, culminating in the crazed deflationary drive of 1981. The purpose of the current administration is to "do a 1981" in the fields of local government, education and welfare.

It is a high-risk strategy, dependent on containing backbench rebellion when the going gets tough and keeping sweet a sufficient proportion of peers. The backbenches contain a significant number of ex-ministers with a capacity for causing trouble. The weightiest political figures are no longer in the cabinet, forcing her to rely on loyalists of the calibre of a Nicholas Ridley or a John Moore. And clearly, in past weeks, dissent has broadened, requiring the whips — echoing what for Macmillan was a joke — to plead with potential dissidents not to oppose the government on more than one issue at a time.

In her previous administrations Mrs Thatcher kept her party solid by alighting on big issues which appeared, to Tories of every stripe, to be of "national" rather than merely class significance. In 1982 this was the war with Argentina, Thatcher diving straight through the burning hoop and jumping clear of the memories of the 1981 economic disaster; and in 1984-85 the bid to destroy the National Union of Mineworkers. Without some cataclysmic "national" project of this order Thatcher could be again in trouble.

The interesting figure in this regard is John Biffen. In the early days of Thatcherism it is instructive to recall he was a monetarist of vigilantist temperament. It was he, in June 1979, who persuaded the cabinet to take on the huge hike in VAT. Today he is a rebel, anxious that further assaults on established institutions can only bring the whole edifice tumbling down, the Tory party included.

But in other ways, too, the long-term situation for the Conservative Party is more precarious than its optimists suppose. Scotland has virtually been lost. Surplus revenue from North Sea oil is fast diminishing. Lawson's attempt to restage a second Barber boom is silently accumulating a huge balance of payments deficit. And even the *Financial Times*, for the first time since 1981, is worrying about the burial alive of a new and permanent underclass.

The current backbench disaffection reflects pressures from the constituencies quite as much, say, as Michael Heseltine's well-publicised capacity for making trouble. If a movement as aspiringly radical as Thatcher's — aiming decisively to transform the state and create a new order — finds that the transformation destroys its own popular base, then it can only retreat to an administrative politics of central command and compulsion, leaving it increasingly exposed and vulnerable. □

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DIARY

Watching a television news report about the hijacked Kuwaiti airliner last week, I was startled to see an interview with a pasty-faced young pundit who was introduced merely as "Ian Geldard, Institute for the Study of Terrorism". Viewers might well assume that here was some independent, authoritative "expert" with no axe to grind. What they would not realise is that the Institute's definition of terrorism is about as skew-whiff as the Freedom Association's version of "freedom". I mentioned here recently the Institute's unreliable report on Sri Lanka. In Middle-Eastern matters it is even worse: it consistently turns a blind eye to any atrocities carried out in the name of Israel while denouncing the "terrorist" PLO at every opportunity. And what of young Geldard? Before joining the Institute two years ago he was a leading activist in the Federation of Conservative Students, on the hard-line "libertarian" wing. He used to share a house with another FCS right-winger, David Hoile, who attracted some notoriety by going on patrol in Central America with the *contras*. The Institute, I need hardly say, has never published a single word about the *contras'* own contribution to the history of terrorism.

○

Building societies have been slow to come to terms with the spiv culture of the 1980s. But they're learning. The directors of the Abbey National want to float it on the stock market, turning a mutual society into just another seedy PLC, with all the executive share options and sod-you mentality that that implies. The Abbey's chairman, Sir Campbell Adamson, announced this intention too late to have it included in the agenda for next week's AGM. And the ballot on flotation will already have been held by the time of the 1989 AGM. Suspicious minds might almost think that the Abbey is trying to prevent debate. One member sought reassurance from Adamson on this point. The reply, which has just arrived, is a collector's item.

"It is right what you say that the members should be able to give an informed judgment on the matter," Sir Campbell writes. "I cannot agree, however, that members opposed to the flotation should be able to make their case in any literature sent out by the Society. The Society's Board will be recommending the change and it must be prepared to argue its case properly, but there is no case in my view for allowing those members who may be opposed to it (possibly many of them for totally different reasons) to have their minority case written up and sent out with our recommendations.

"Nevertheless," he concludes, apparently with a straight face, "I can give you the assurance you ask for; we will do all we can to ensure that the debate is an informed one."

Note, especially, Adamson's sniffy description of the argument against flotation as a "minority case" — this before a single member has been consulted on the subject.

Thousands of *NS* readers must have accounts with Abbey National. If you are one of them, I urge you to contact a new group called Abbey Members Against Flotation at 22 Birkbeck Road, Ealing, London W5 4ES. The Abbey intends to make its investors pay good money to buy back something which they already own anyway. As Keith Waterhouse once remarked, this is the sort of con for which men in camel-hair coats used to be arrested at Brighton racecourse. Now it is government policy. But perhaps, just this once, it can be stopped.

○

Another sign of the triumph of the fast-buck culture is that people now boast of things which would have been thought unseemly a few years ago. A firm selling electronic bugging devices, Lorraine Electronics, has just hired Smedley McAlpine Public Relations to promote itself. I have before me the first offspring of this coupling, a press release beginning thus: "Once it was just the stuff of detective stories and American political scandals, but now electronic surveillance, or 'bugging', has become an accepted part of British life, both in the office and at home." The range of uses, it adds brightly, is virtually limitless — "from the boardrooms of the country's biggest public companies to private individuals who want to check up on their spouse's fidelity."

William Parsons of Lorraine Electronics tells me that "we don't have any gimmicky devices such as ashtrays with transmitters, we just have practical equipment". I suppose it depends what you mean by gimmicky. He does sell "recording briefcases", as well as bugs disguised as ball-point pens or pocket calculators. Does the firm have any ways of preventing these seedy products from being put to illegal use? "None whatever," Parsons says cheerfully.

○

ROGER WODDIS

Talking of Zola

"Budd should be supported on this issue. There's a very strong principle involved," — Hugh Jones, who came fourth in the London Marathon, on the Olympics ban proposed by the International Amateur Athletic Federation

"Run, Zola, run!" the billboards cry,
And her supporters, sick at heart,
Though there are those who wonder why,
Demand her presence at the start.
(The Sharpeville Six may live or die —
But that is something quite apart.)

The principle involved is strong,
Fair play, they say, has lost control;
But one who stands out from the throng
Should be more mindful of her role,
For she must know it would be wrong
To lose the world and gain her Seoul.

There are worse things than losing face,
And more to life than running-shoes.
Another time, another place,
When bigotry was hardly news,
As champion of another race
Another Zola wrote "J'accuse."

For some months the Labour Party gift shop in Walworth Road has sold hip-flasks. A proud Labour slogan is printed in red on each grey leather case — just the thing for picket-line duty or General Committee meetings.

But something odd has happened. Though the hip-flasks still have grey leather cases, the slogans have been removed. Why? So that people could give them to friends without being embarrassed, according to the woman behind the counter. "We thought," she explained, "that they'd sell better without 'Labour' on them." I sometimes wonder if the same reasoning isn't being applied to the marketing of the party itself.

○

One of the perks of belonging to the North Oxon Villages Labour Party is that the historian Christopher Hill is a member too. Last Friday evening he told our branch meeting, with regret, that "history is a subject of declining interest."

The very next morning, I opened the *Daily Telegraph* and found this: "I am saddened to see interest in our own history slipping away." The author: Kenneth Baker, Education Secretary and all-purpose smart alec, plugging his *Faber Book of English History in Verse*.

The echo is misleading. History, according to Kenneth Baker, is "the narrative flow of events, of dates, of facts, of kings and queens". He adds: "I make no apology for writing about famous people — heroes, if you like." Arthur Bryant — not to mention Sellar and Yeatman — would be proud of him.

But Christopher Hill, who has devoted much of his life to challenging this vision of history, admitted last week that doubt is now creeping in. "I used to say 'Britain was the first country to chop off a king's head, Hooray! Hooray!'" But now with Prince Charles and "all these splendid peers" and the Bishop of Durham it's not so simple. The Labour Party ought to be "stretching out its hands" to such people. "I'm very hostile to the Church of England, the monarchy and the House of Lords," he concluded gloomily. "But they're all we've got."

○

Incidentally, grand old man though he may be, Christopher Hill must watch his language. Last week he summarised sexual divisions thus: "In the 17th century, if you hadn't a penis you had no chance at all." This is the sort of talk that lands one in the soup, as I have just discovered. A few weeks ago in this column I referred to the Secretary of State for Energy — uncontentiously enough, I thought — as "the penis-brained Cecil Parkinson". Now a complaint about the epithet has been lodged with the Press Council by my old friends the Freedom Association. This raises two questions. What business is all this of the Freedom Association, clause five of whose Charter commits it to "Freedom of Speech and Publication"? And, if the phrase "penis-brained" is impermissible, how else would the Association describe a man who thinks with his prick?

Francis Wheen

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Zola's time runs out

THE WORLD first heard of Zola Budd when, as a skinny barefoot 17-year-old, she broke the world 5,000 metres record running in South Africa in January 1984. Since then the girl from Bloemfontein has spent scarcely a moment away from controversy, culminating with this week's ultimatum from the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) to the British Board that it either suspend her or risk seeing British athletes banned from international competition.

It began when she arrived in Britain in March 1984 to apply for British citizenship on the grounds that she had a British grandfather. Sponsored by the *Daily Mail* — who paid her passage here and ran a front-page campaign for her naturalisation — Zola Budd was granted citizenship by the Home Office only ten days after arrival. Not surprisingly, the move provoked uproar in view of the usually rigid observance of a minimum nine-month waiting period for applicants (which has been known to extend beyond three years in some cases). Neither did it go unnoticed that 1984 happened to be Olympic year and Budd was then available to be selected for the British team.

For Zola the Los Angeles Olympics that August were to bring only further controversy when she tripped the home favourite, America's Mary Decker, and caused a storm that eclipsed even the success of Britain's silver medallist Wendy Sly in a race where Zola finished eighth.

By November Budd had returned to South Africa for the first of many prolonged visits "home". And this is where the roots of the present controversy really lie. For despite having twice won the world cross country championships and setting a new world 5,000 metres record in a British vest, by August 1986 she had yet to comply with article 31.3 of the Commonwealth Games charter that competitors must spend at least half of the preceding year in the country they wish to represent. She was thus ruled ineligible for the 1986 games.

The latest wrangle centres around her alleged participation in a competitive race in South Africa at Brakpan, an act which would clearly contravene IAAF rules. Several explanations have been offered. Initially mistaken identity was claimed — and indeed it was established that a participant closely resembling Budd did compete. But evidence that Budd herself was indisputably present brought the explanation that although she was there, she was merely a spectator and did no more than jog *alongside* the track.

But the incident itself pales into insignificance beside the wider issue at stake here. The frequency of her visits to South Africa invites the suggestion that Zola Budd is, in reality, a South African running in British colours for mere convenience. Certainly the South African press seem in no doubt that her achievements on the track represent a rare glimpse of South African sporting prowess in the international arena. A triumph for Zola is a triumph for them.

However, it must also be remembered that Zola Budd is not by herself to blame for apartheid and this is the dilemma. Her repeated claim that "I'm a runner not a politician" is no doubt genuine; none but the most cold-hearted could fail to be moved by the image of this frail, if naive, girl being subjected to constant turmoil merely for wanting to exercise her natural talents as an athlete. Why pick on her? Even the most liberal of observers have accused the world's athletic authorities of "moving the goal posts". What must she do, comes the cry?

Well, there is one very simple thing she can do. And that is to dissolve her links with South Africa as completely as she implied when she gave up her South African passport for a British one. Her "merely training" there may not of itself contravene IAAF rules but it is against their spirit and it *does* contravene United Nations policy that for a celebrity to even appear in South Africa is to offer legitimacy to its social codes. It is not Zola Budd's fault that she was born in South Africa — but millions of black South Africans can say the same and suffer far more greatly for all their innocence. Budd has been offered something which few of them have — the opportunity to turn her back on South Africa and be adopted by another nation.

So long as she lives and trains in South Africa and is seen coming to Britain in Olympic year in order to qualify for international competition, she is open to criticism. Furthermore, as she herself is beginning to realise, by so doing she jeopardises Britain's very standing in international sport.

Zola Budd must make her choice: either she is a British citizen whose commitment to Britain no one can question, or she is a South African citizen and must accept the price of apartheid, as her country's black population must. Unlike them she has a choice.

David Upshal

Confessions of a 'girlie line' company

A RECENT advertisement in the *Guardian* media pages asking for "comedy script writers to provide material for an expanding telephone entertainment and information company" provides a fascinating glimpse into the increasingly murky world that is post-privatisation British Telecom.

The advertisement was placed by Georgian Advertising Associates on behalf of their client (and, incidentally, proprietor) Streettide Ltd, operators of a number of telephone entertainment and information lines. Among these is a series of "girlie lines", which Streettide wishes to discontinue by 1 May because of what it calls "considerable pressure" on British Telecom to put an end to this kind of service.

The problem is, however, that Streettide has booked a great deal of space in adult magazines in order to advertise its "girlie lines"; these ads will continue to run for some four months, the advertising copy dates being quarterly. Rather than simply abandon the service altogether, Streettide has hit upon the wheeze of replacing its "'erotica entertainment' with 'spoof/Benny Hill' type entertainment". The letter sent out to prospective script writers warns that "all messages and 'situation comedies' that are broadcast by the company must be of an all family nature and would be suitable for showing on television before 9 p.m. Under no conditions whatsoever must the 'Benny Hill' type entertainment be, or considered to be, indecent or offensive and all scripts that are produced must be prepared in the belief that children may listen to them."

Helpfully, the company also provides an example of one of the advertisements due to appear in the adult magazines. Over a picture of two scantily clad young women this promises "the Nympho Chat Up Line — a tape recording of an outrageous live call-in line". Potential script writers are invited to compose a sample Benny Hill-style script which might fit the "Nympho" bill but are warned "do not use the word 'nympho'. 'Nymph' is OK if it refers to water nymph, mud (sic) nymph etc".

The company also sends potential contributors a rough draft of "what is considered a good script". This turns out to be *Confessions of a Vestal Virgin*, an un-funny and certainly un-erotic spoof. The only interesting thing about it is the self-reflexive manner in which it explicitly dramatises the fictional, duplicitous nature of the whole operation. It also demonstrates very clearly the teasing quality of all such material, which constantly frustrates the punter and leaves him wanting more. Thus just as the "vestal virgin" is apparently about to embark on her "confessions" she is interrupted on several occasions by "Caesar's private water nymph Candy" who invites the listener to dial another number and hear another message. The idea, presumably, is to fool him into believing that something considerably hotter is on offer there.

Indeed, the whole point of all such messages is to lure the customer into a potentially endless series of calls. As the company puts it, "*all scripts must* be geared to inviting the listener to telephone another number", and to this end it has worked out a little formula: "the 'reference number' must be referred to between $1\frac{3}{4}$ — $2\frac{1}{4}$ minutes. It is then referred to again after approx. 3 minutes and then referred to again after the 5th minute, then again after the 7th minute and finally at the end (after 10 minutes)". We also discover that about half of all callers to "spoof" lines replace the phone within the first two minutes and that average listening time is about four minutes.

If *Confessions of a Vestal Virgin* is anything to go by this might seem tolerant in the extreme. However, although there will be those who think that anyone who calls up "girlie lines" deserves all they get (or rather, don't get) others may well feel that to promise one thing and deliver another is a matter for the Advertising Standards Authority and Trading Standards Officers.

Julian Petley

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Ethiopians ask starving for back taxes

THE ETHIOPIAN government is reacting to the headway made by rebel guerrillas by making it even more difficult for starving people from opposition-held areas to receive food rations, according to recently returned aid workers.

One consultant with a major British agency tells of government troops setting up road blocks and turning back people from areas held by the Tigray People's Liberation Front or making food aid conditional on them paying back taxes and agreeing to resettle outside Tigray. Mengistu, the Ethiopian leader, has also asked all international agencies to leave the area.

Mengistu has consistently refused to allow food trucks to go into opposition-held areas. The TPLF now controls over 85 per cent of Tigray including, for the first time in its history, all the northern towns as well as the road links between Eritrea and the Ethiopian highlands. The recent capture of the town of Afabet by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, forcing the Ethiopian army to withdraw from the entire west of Eritrea, has put the Ethiopians further onto the defensive.

The only agency now working inside opposition-held areas is the Relief Society of Tigray, an indigenous organisation, which can feed half a million people: an impressive total but less than 20 per cent of the 2.6 million in need of assistance. It advises others to attend feeding centres in government-held towns.

"Awodju Adhane, a young woman with two children from central Tigray, particularly badly hit by drought, had gone to the [government-held] town of Maichew, where the Red Cross ran a feeding centre," said the consultant. "She told me: 'the district administrator asked us for two years back taxes which we didn't have and then told us about resettlement, about green and fertile lands with plenty of water. When he saw we didn't want to go, he got angry and called us beggars and locusts. The soldiers then started shooting and everybody ran. I grabbed my children and ran for about an hour. I was afraid to go back after that.' "

Keshi Geremariam, an orthodox priest, said that when he and others complained that they had registered at a feeding centre but weren't being given rations they were beaten by Ethiopian soldiers. "You Tigrayans, you are army worms, grasshoppers. You are always hungry. Now the TPLF are teaching you how to talk. OK, go and eat their words."

James Firebrace, War on Want's Programme Director for North Africa and the Middle East, was also in the region last month and confirms that people seeking aid from rebel-held areas are made to pay back taxes and often forced to resettle. He stressed that the only way to ensure that hundreds of thousands of people don't perish in the present cycle of famine is the negotiation of safe passage for food into opposition-held territory. In the longer term "only an end to the war will break the cycle of poverty".

From what he has seen the EPLF and TPLF, which are not backed by any outside government, have "undoubtedly won the hearts and minds of the population. They have carried out sweeping land reforms, instituted far-reaching reforms benefiting women, established a grassroots democracy of elected People's Assemblies at village level and are providing the basic services of health, education and agricultural extension denied to them under Ethiopian rule".

But it is perhaps the Ethiopians' backers, the Soviets, who provide the key to peace — and the responsibility to initiate it. Gorbachev's *glasnost* sits uneasily alongside Mengistu's dogmatic and authoritarian style, but the scale of opposition victories and the capture of three Soviet officers should give further incentive to the Kremlin to turn its attention from Afghanistan to Ethiopia.

Jane Dibblin

Credit where it's due

In last week's issue we omitted a credit for Channel 4's *Media Show* in the story on America's Son-of-Sam laws, "Crook books". The author, Louis Heaton, is a researcher on the programme.

Young's European conversion

LORD YOUNG's PR machine has found a new toy to play with. No longer just Enterprise Minister, Young is now to be Mrs Thatcher's ideological emissary to Europe. His mission: to make sure no one in Britain has an excuse for not knowing that 1992, as his slogan has it, is the year "Europe is open for business".

Euro-notables by the dozen were flown into London on Monday to join in a massive press launch of his publicity campaign to convince business that it should begin preparing now for the opening up of Europe's markets. By 1992, if all goes to plan, the EEC will have swept away the swathes of protective legislation which keep European companies locked into national markets and hamper their ability to compete on the world stage. British business, says Young, should wake up to the fact that in five years time they will be presented with massive new markets in Europe, but also tougher challenges from European competitors than it's ever faced before.

But Lord Young's conversion to the EEC has been sudden. Until a year ago his only interest in the affairs of the Brussels commission was to hector all who would listen on the dangers of European legislation, like the proposed directive on paternal leave.

Even now his zeal for things European is highly selective. When pressed on detail, Young attacks the Commission's plans for abolishing frontier controls and harmonising VAT. What Young is after is a kind of Euro-Thatcherism, cutting red tape (and wages) in the EEC, taking the benefits the Thatcher revolution has realised in Britain into Europe. He, like his leader, has little time for other European leaders' dreams of a united Europe, still less for Commission President Jacques Delors' fondness for some European social legislation to ensure that 1992 does not entirely destroy what's left of the European welfare state.

The City has its eye on lucrative markets for insurance and other financial services where age-old legislation barring it from competing is about to be lifted. But there is little sign of any serious planning for how to go about winning these new markets. Similar complacency seems to reign within the ranks of the "leaner, fitter" British industry. Compared with French or Italian business people who are bombarding the Commission with requests for information, they are barely at the starting post.

Many fear we're about to see a rerun of 1973 when British industry ignored the warnings about the competition that would flow from British membership of the Community and woke up five years later to find that their clients were now buying German.

The chairman of Tesco's, quizzed last week about how retailers were gearing up for 1992, replied that the sector had "nothing to fear". Such complacency is astounding.

Lord Young's main achievement may well have been to create new biz-speak buzzwords, but little hope that any of the five million jobs the Commission believes the internal market could create may come Britain's way.

Andrew Garfield

If the caption fits

No 64

OK, Mrs Thatcher has featured pretty heavily in the caption contest recently, but on the other hand Mother Teresa of Calcutta has hardly been seen at all. We want speech or thinks bubbles or captions to accompany this alarming juxtaposition. The opportunities for bad taste are boundless: see if you can avoid them. On a postcard by 6 May please. Winner gets £10 book token.

No 62: Winner

Peter Bottomley: "We first met at the Isle of Wight Rock Festival." *(Brian Ruth, London EC1.)*

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Order, order . . . *please*

IF YOU'RE A Trot who believes passionately in extra-parliamentary action, it must be tough to find yourself elected an MP. You have to find ways of being extra-parliamentary even when you're in parliament.

That's the kindest explanation of the activities of Militant-supporting Dave Nellist and hard left Ron Brown. The Nellist episode which led to his expulsion from the Chamber during the social security debate last week was universally interpreted as an own goal since it inadvertently gave a respite to the floundering John Moore: Brown's defies explanation.

Rowdyism in parliament, according to those who watch it for a living, is on the increase. It's by no means confined to the Labour benches: but while the thuggish tendency of the Tory party is just as *noisy*, the speaker, Bernard Weatherill, is less tough on them. That seems to be in part because Labour's rowdies act from "subversive" motives, whereas the Tories are just louts.

Brown's flamboyant antics and deliberate flouting of parliamentary codes by refusing to apologise may be considered delayed adolescent rebellion. As for Nellist, he is a hard-working parliamentarian who does his homework. But unlike, say, Tony Banks, who's equally deft and almost as left, he is under pressure — both externally and from his own conscience — to demonstrate his extra-parliamentary virility. Partly it's just irrepressible enthusiasm which makes him bounce up and down asking questions on every conceivable point.

Labour's rowdyism takes many and varied forms. At its least attractive there is Ronnie Campbell, who specialises in bellowing across the chamber. Dennis Skinner is far more skilled: he often manages to provoke the Speaker to just short of the point where he is forced to take action. The Campaign Group mounted an effective protest during the Budget speech, with massed slow chanting of "shame".

Clearly much of it stems from simple frustration. But the knowledge that disruption is almost the only guaranteed method of getting media coverage is also a strong spur.

The Speaker's problem is lack of sanctions. He can suspend a sitting, thereby generating the very publicity which the protest was designed to create; or he can expel or suspend the errant member, which has no real bite, since the member continues to get paid. (A pious attempt by Tory backbenchers to have a system of fines imposed on unruly members is now before the Procedure Committee.) And nowadays the television cameras are actually waiti ıg outside Westminster by arrangement with the MP who has cooked up the explusion well in advance.

Labour's problem is its chief whip, Derek Foster, who clearly can't control the lads. It's not easy for any Labour whip, because it is an *elected* post, and Foster's particular difficulty is that he appears to have decided that his constituency includes the hard left. He can hardly please them and at the same time carry out the usual whipping business of stitching up deals with his Tory counterparts. But if the poachers elect the gamekeeper, what can you expect?

Jolyon Jenkins

POLITICAL SKETCH

Finger-clicking awful

Edward Pearce

THE SIGHT of Michael Mates leading an uprising still looks incongruous. There were times during the Peter Wright affair and the debate on secrecy when Colonel Mates seemed never to be out of the television studios going sedulously down the line in packhorse loyalty. I recollect saying uncharitable things. They will have to be taken back.

A serious rebellion is as much against the culture of conservatism as it is a response to a whack on the knee with a rubber hammer from Labour. Much has been made of peasants' revolts. With a regular army colonel and a baronet (Sir George Young) to the fore, we get a better class of peasant.

Mr Mates has a large measure of calm and he needed it. The tactics of the Tory whips were as subtle as a breezeblock barricade. It is a desperate cause which needs an intervention from Eric Forth, aversion therapy in human form, who rose to enquire before Mr Mates had got comfortably into his second sentence how he could defend his abandonment of the Tory manifesto.

Thereafter the Mates speech was streaked with the blood of Housecarls, terrible trainee loyalists from the intake, people whose names are blessedly obscure treading behind the massed intellects of Winston Churchill, Gerald Howarth and Edward Leigh. The idea was clear enough. "Harass him," "Make coherent argument impossible." Such tactics represent a species of very obvious bullying which makes for a fastidious response and is as likely to lose backbench support as gain it. Coupled with the message "Don't expect a job if you vote with Mates", it had the quality of low-grade desperation.

It shows in the quality of the speeches. Odd, really, the way morale and coherence slump when a speaker has to defend the indefensible. Mr Ridley, who does, in his slashing astringent way, believe in the enterprise, was subdued to the point of narcosis. His speech stood beside the great John Moore whisper of Wednesday last. Taking refuge in tedious detail, alluding again and again to his duty to take care of "the needs of the less well orff", a locution which rides aptly with proposals to hit married couples on a hundred a week with the full rate! The Secretary of State sounded like the remote custodian of a cabalistic piece of paper, obliged to defend it in the last ditch of a battlefield which no sensible Tory had contemplated approaching.

This is *not* the next Chancellor of the Exchequer, this is a short-tempered ferrule-twirling bundle of arrogance learning what uppance looks like when it comes.

On the subject of bad speeches, I have never heard Norman Tebbit so dull and short of felicity. He fell back onto the familiar food and candles line of argument (not subsidised, why should rates be?) and had the misfortune to let himself be manoeuvred by a Scottish Labour member into defending a £5 rate on a £53 income. When the heavy cannon gives off a gentle pop somebody is in trouble.

LABOUR'S tactic in mid debate seemed to be one of avoiding public attention and letting Colonel Mates and Sir George get on with it. For serious boringness a roll call of Kevin Barron, Martin Redmond and Dick Douglas has Olympic potential. There is something about Mr Douglas in the best of causes which reminds me of a Presbyterian minister. Short back and sides like a footballer in 1934, gold spectacles and a thumping manner of speech, taking issues, secondly, thirdly and terminally, he would adorn any pulpit north of the Tweed. All of this has the advantage of lulling the government into a false sense of security, not at all the purpose of Jack Cunningham.

> *Odd the way morale and coherence slump when a speaker has to defend the indefensible*

The authority of the Opposition spokesman is impressive. The voice carries without being repressive. He attacks without ranting, and as we all know, he came armed with the depositions of a little Mercury in Downing Street itself. Quite what fits of champagne fury must have broken behind those secluding walls one can only guess at. Certainly Bernard Ingham was in a vermilion rage upstairs. If they ever find out who passed on the housing taper and the economy on rebates, Tower Green itself will not be too good. The desire of sensible Conservatives to get their party out of the just and logical consequences of a half-cracked monomaniac scheme are accompanied by Dr Cunningham's cool understanding that he is on velvet. Open goals are not being missed from the Labour front bench these days. Indeed in his conclusion, as he motioned the Secretary of State back to his seat as a parenthetic irrelevance, something happened symbolically. It was arrogant, that's for sure and arrogance couldn't happen to a nicer fellow. But the final sending back of Ridley to his seat was a measure of authority passing, confidence rising as it collapses opposite and most instructive.

Confidence of course, is a commodity in a bull phase with Mr Heseltine. He had to wait, and one had the impression of the whips trying to keep him off prime time, but when he came it was high derisive comedy. For the first time ever I had an impression of Welshness, a way of stressing syllables appropriate to first-class demagoguery.

He was of course also notably apt. The concessions made at the very bottom have only aggravated the punch between the eyes endured by the only fairly badly orff. Interestingly, Heseltine was out in Tebbit and Thatcher country, lamenting the penalty falling on the council house-buying, self-employed, first-time Conservative voter. I have the impression that this is not an ordinary revolt. Ambition comes into it, certainly. Genuine concern with fairness also actually plays a part (that is the glory of Sir George). But Conservative despair at Conservative awfulness is involved as well. The lady may have clicked a finger too far. □

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Prescott: learning to smile

TO JOHN PRESCOTT, Neil is still Neil, Tony is Tony and Eric remains Eric. Roy, it seems, has ceased to exist. He has become "the present incumbent". Occasionally, he is plain "Hattersley" spat out with a venom usually reserved for Tory MPs shouting at former waiter Prescott for "a large one, please, Giovanni".

Though Prescott insists, often, that he will not attack Roy Hattersley personally in his deputy leadership campaign, it's no secret that there is little love lost between them. Admittedly, during a long interview, he refrained from such attacks. He even claimed to have rebuked a supporter who spread the word that Hattersley was "better known as a journalist than a socialist".

On policy and beliefs, however, the attacks flow. "I have political differences with him and he'd be the first to say he has them with me. I certainly disagreed with his economic policies at the election. But my differences with him on the job description of the deputy leader are not about personality or the way he's done the job."

The job description. Seen by some as a front to settle old scores. Seen by Prescott as "vital" to Labour's chances of making the party fit to win the next election. Seen by Neil Kinnock as a lame excuse for a distracting election.

Prescott argues the case persuasively, though colleagues suspect that he would not be so zealous about the nature of the deputy leader's role if the deputy leader were someone other than "the present incumbent".

His job description is well known: lead the drive to create a mass party, free of a departmental portfolio; tour the constituencies and sort out organisation; handle flak which currently flies at the leader. Throughout he stresses loyalty to Kinnock. "He's got the worst job in politics. A lot of the scraps he gets into are because he's doing things a deputy should be doing."

I'm doing it for Neil, he seems to be saying. The irony, bearing in mind the leader's views on the subject, is apparently lost on him. Prescott agreed with Kinnock, when he backed down from standing in January, that the contest would damage Labour. "I must have accepted that, but I don't accept the totality of the argument," he says. "Not to run because it was damaging would mean you can only have elections when the incumbent wants to retire. Do you just leave it to them and the smoke filled rooms, or do you contest it?"

It was the decision by Benn and Heffer to take on Kinnock and Hattersley that led him to re-enter the fray. He is still smarting at what was widely interpreted as "humiliation" by the leadership when he stood down. He insists that general secretaries promised him they would press for a conference debate on the deputy leader's role and that Kinnock was involved in those discussions. Indeed the only real venom expressed was fired at "Kinnock's Colonels", MPs supportive of the leadership, who "obey orders whether they're right or wrong". He claims the colonels have been playing up his image as a thug. "There's a feeling around — 'goad him and he'll lose his temper by June.' They're wrong," says Prescott.

He wants to share party platforms with Hattersley, without the press and TV present. This apparent shyness has nothing to do with his negative, bruising image, but more to do with minimising the media's chances of exploiting division, he says. In any case, having realised his brutish approach wins few friends outside the party, he says he's changing his style. "People get put off by aggression. They say to me I should smile more."

He says he was wrong to reject Walworth Road's past offer of TV training. "I doubt if they'd ask now. I don't think Walworth Road is in my camp. It was them that kept me off TV during the election because of my image. But I'm thinking more about how I communicate now. You want to leave people feeling that was a good guy and his points were good. What they say about me is that his points were good but I thought he was going to thump someone. It's counter productive."

That is a phrase Kinnock's colonels use to describe the whole contest.

Alastair Campbell

Alastair Campbell is political editor of the Sunday Mirror.

West Enders
SQUEEEEEEE
HERE, I'VE SAVED SOME CHICKEN BONES FOR YOU!!
JUST BOIL THEM UP WITH A BIT OF CARDBOARD AND YOU HAVE A VERY NOURISHING SOUP. CAN YOU HEAR ME???
I SAID: CAN YOU HEAR ME? I HAVEN'T HEARD ANY THANKYOUS YET !!!
THANKYOU, MA'AM! WE'LL COOK THEM UP RIGHT AWAY!
WELL, MUST BE ORFF - I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR MOTHER THERESA. BY THE WAY OFFICER - I THINK YOU SHOULD ARREST THAT CHAP - HE'S LIGHTING A FIRE!
10
THIS IS SUCH A DEEPLY SPIRITUAL MOMENT FOR ME, HOLY MOTHER: I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU!
YES, WE DON'T BELIEVE IN ABANDONING THE HOMELESS. RIDLEY HERE WILL SEE TO THAT!
I KISS YOUR HAND, HOLY MOTHER!
YOOHOO!! WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOU!! IT'S POLL TAX TIME !!!!!
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BEN PIMLOTT

The politics of the poll tax: a touch of spring in the air

POWER IN small doses corrupts (as Lord Acton should have said), but winning three elections in a row makes you lose your marbles. The most striking thing about the government's determination over the poll tax isn't that it is wicked or silly but that it is so damned *odd* — as though, like Bonaparte before the March on Moscow, the Prime Minister was driven by an impulse of self-destruction.

Consider. You get re-elected after a pretty disastrous campaign, not on the basis of a rashly rhetorical manifesto but because of the clientele you have built up over the preceding eight years, and you find yourself with a larger majority than you could ever have dared hope for. What do you do? This is a premier who has a sense of history and of her own place in it, so we would not expect her to settle for a quiet life. Still, we might imagine that she could pick and choose among the hastily concocted items in her manifesto, even stand back from the fray. Instead, there has been the relentless, anxious acceleration, the remorseless refusal to consolidate. And right from the start, there has been the flagship.

The point about this always leaky vessel is that nobody has ever had much interest in it apart from the Prime Minister herself and Mr Ridley and, perhaps, one or two people at the Adam Smith Institute. In the Cabinet, enthusiasm has been a dog that has significantly failed to bark; lower down in the government and among obedient backbenchers the general attitude was best revealed by the pained expressions and reluctance to be interviewed after the votes on the Mates amendment had been taken.

We are talking about a personal obsession which can be traced back to the October 1974 election when Mrs Thatcher as Environment shadow pledged to abolish the domestic rate. From that time, change was an unrelenting ambition: the problem was to find a suitable alternative. The spur was the ghastly experience of rate revaluation in Scotland in 1985. The prospect of a similar uproar in England filled Tory leaders with horror: the time for grasping the local government finance nettle seemed to have arrived. Local sales and incomes taxes were rejected. The poll tax passed the ideological tests of the moment.

It therefore received government endorsement — for the first time — in the 1986 Green Paper, and gained a place in the manifesto: a document which we should certainly examine with care. For it reveals the critical extent to which holders of the new faith have invested common words with new meaning. This applies, in the case of the poll tax, to the understanding of the word "fair". Last summer's Tory manifesto declares the government's plan, in the first session of the new Parliament, "to abolish the unfair domestic rating system and replace it with a fairer Community Charge".

Why (we may now ask) did Labour not make more of this promise at the time? There were three reasons. First, the full impact of such a tax was not at first understood (even now, according to Mr Ridley's private secretary, the issue is only just "beginning to be understood by a number of backbenchers"). Second, although the manifesto spelt out what the so-called Charge would consist of, few imagined that it would be introduced in such an undiluted form, or as quickly. Kenneth Baker's 1986 Green Paper, after all, had anticipated a ten-year introduction period — which, in practice, could have meant an unrecognisably different tax. Third, for a variety of well-publicised reasons the spending behaviour of local authorities was not a subject on which Labour wished the electorate to concentrate its mind.

> *Other measures have been skilfully divisive, building high ramparts around the Thatcherite encampment. Here is a reform which is simply bad politics*

Hence the campaign managers at Walworth Road should not be blamed too much for permitting the poll tax proposal to slip through with little challenge. Indeed, such was the climate a year ago that the Tory manifesto might have promised to reintroduce slavery without such a pledge having an appreciable influence on the election result. The consequence of the community charge commitment, however, has been to provide a mandate for the most bizarre piece of doctrinal rubbish of recent times, while, at the same time, highlighting the absurdity of the "mandate" theory itself, which accords to a document which almost nobody reads (the manifesto) a status of inviolable legitimacy.

HOW MANY electors who backed the Conservatives last June realised that they were voting for the poll tax? Not many, I would wager. But those who did, and knew their manifesto back to front, would have been seriously misled by its wording. Most people understand "fair" in the dictionary sense of just, equitable, equal, even-handed, free from moral stain, free from fraud or bias, legitimate, tolerable. In the new Conservative lexicon, on the other hand, it has acquired a different, special meaning. In place of the childhood notion of fair shares or do-as-you-would-be-done-by, or the decent citizen's sense that it is only fair to help those who are down on their luck, there is the equal right of all individuals to shrug off social responsibilities. Hence the newspeak terminology which labels the proposed tax a "charge": the fairness is supposedly that of the marketplace, the fairness that charges the billionaire and the pauper exactly the same for a Rolls Royce. "Conservatives are not egalitarians", as the seminal 1976 Tory document, *The Right Approach*, succinctly put it. "We believe in levelling up. . . not levelling down, which dries the springs of enterprise and endeavour." Fairness becomes a synonym for most people's understanding of the opposite.

Such New Right "fairness" has already, in recent weeks, guided Mr Baker through his Eduction Bill, Mr Lawson through his Budget and Mr Moore through the reform of Social Security: the reallocation of resources from richer to poorer has at least been a consistent principle. What distinguishes the poll tax, however, is that here, to a unique degree, the application of the advanced moral code is combined with a disdain for practicality. Other measures have been skilfully divisive, building high protective ramparts around the Thatcherite encampment, and maintaining a high morale among beneficiaries. Here, however, is a reform which is simply bad politics.

Though there will be gainers as well as losers, the arbitrariness of the distinction between the two, and in many cases the extremity of the imposition, is rapidly alienating the government's natural supporters. The aim is to penalise high-spending authorities, and kick Labour councils in the teeth, in particular. It will certainly do the former, by imposing a higher degree of central control on local budgets, and by greatly distorting the impact on poll tax payers of any increase in local expenditure.

The latter, however, is much more dubious. In theory, a Labour-controlled authority which wishes to spend more and has to pass on the cost in exaggerated form to electors, will face public anger and electoral desertion. The theory, however, depends on the assumption that the local authority will be blamed. Yet such has been the isolation of the government in its pursuit of the tax change that voters — who in any case frequently blur distinctions between local and central responsibility — are much more likely to react against the Conservatives. So far, the Opposition has been laudably single-minded in presenting the hated charge as a Tory tax. As the actual impact of the tax becomes increasingly apparent, it should be possible to make the point even plainer. Thus Labour authorities, should they have to increase the charge, will be able to make it clear that the distasteful necessity has been forced upon them.

Could the tax seriously damage the Tories nationally, as well as locally? Provided Labour keeps its cool (Mace-seizing and, even worse, poll tax strikes are to be avoided), there are grounds for thinking that a measure that will affect so many people so emphatically for so little purpose may hasten the moment of disillusion.

This week there is just a touch of spring in the air. A pretty united main Opposition party, give or take a disgruntled leadership candidate or two; an abler and more confident shadow team than for years, occasionally capable of finding the target; the lucky disappearance of the third party distraction; plus a government that is beginning to show symptoms of manic exhaustion: toss in an irritant whose capacity to annoy and cause distress will steadily mount, and you have a powder keg that looks tinder dry. The biggest joke of all would be if their lordships, in considering this dotty measure, could be persuaded to ignite the fuse. □

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DISARRAY

Mutiny on the Tory benches

This week's unsuccessful rebellion over the poll tax is the high water mark of the spring tide of infighting, succession struggles and dissent in the Conservative Party. Freebooting rebel* JULIAN CRITCHLEY *charts the "growing resistance"

WHO WOULD begrudge a Tory backbencher his bit of fun? It is no joke being a footsoldier in Mrs Thatcher's New Model Army striving to bring about the New Britain. We are obliged to march and counter-march across the field of battle, voting late at night for Mrs Thatcher's radical reforms. In our great leader's First Term we were told not to wear plumes in our hats, in her Second Term we were told to have nothing whatsoever to do with Mr Michael Heseltine ("the anti-Christ") and now in her Third Term we are under orders to charge uphill in order to make the working class pay for local government. It is no wonder we are somewhat out of breath.

We are even threatened by "sources close to Downing Street" with a Fourth Term in which the "crowning mercy" of our years of toil will be a one clause Bill abolishing the Monarchy ("no longer value for money"). The blue party flag which can be glimpsed today in seaside conference halls being waved energetically by beefy Young Conservatives in front of the Prime Minister will replace the Union Jack and Mrs Thatcher will let it be known that she will not go to Dulwich until she can find a Jew to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. I shall end my days in the John Moore Sunset Home in Worthing with little to look forward to save the annual visit of Lord Tebbit of Chingford. A scant reward for my services to the counter-revolution.

We should spare a thought for the government whips. Party discontent has disturbed the even tenor of their ways, making it difficult for them to squeeze in a game of squash after Prime Minister's Questions. Loyal as hound dogs, they spent the whole of last weekend on the telephone to their weaker brethren proferring carrots and waving sticks in an attempt to rally their flock behind Mr Nicholas Ridley.

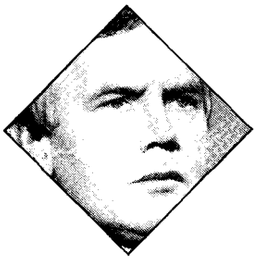
Newly-elected Tories were congratulated on their recent speeches and assured of the Prime Minister's admiration for so promising a start. "Do not spoil it, dear boy" was the message. To older hands who still hanker after promotion, the whips spoke of black Princesses and red boxes, of life in a Whitehall office, waited on hand and foot by their very own Wykehamist. Elderly Tories, in sight of a handle to their name, were reminded of how hard it is nowadays to persuade the Prime Minister to reward the deserving in a way commensurate with their services. Only the hardest men of all, the Heseltines, Biffens, Gilmours and Heaths, were left to slumber undisturbed.

Is Mrs Thatcher a Conservative? She makes great play with the term "radical" which she applies to the policies of her Third Term. She told Patrick Cosgrove that she had changed everything; a vanity which may account for a growing resistance to her discernable among Tories. She does not venerate institutions and she is like all radicals, impatient with those who would disagree with her. The matter of who shall succeeed to the Peacock Throne is of growing interest to members.

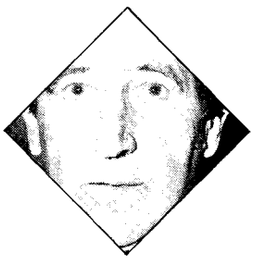
Will it be Michael Heseltine? "Sources close to the Prime Minister" have pointed the finger at Heseltine as the man behind the robust figure of Colonel Mates, the MP for Hampshire East. Heseltine is well equipped to lead the Tory party, but I do not see him winning an election in front of the 1922 committee this side of electoral disaster.

Will it be Norman Tebbit? I think it most unlikely. Tebbit has offended too many Tory MPs to be *papabile*. He is engaging, unscrupulous and impertinent. His opinion that the Prince of Wales has little to do (the implication being that the devil makes work for idle hands) was as cheeky as it was

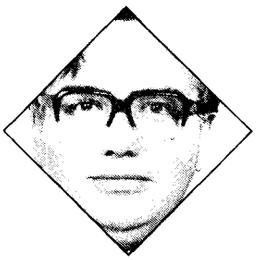
Ten Tory MPs abstained last Wednesday in a vote on the social security changes which mean that people with over £6,000 in the bank now get no help with their rent or rates. The next day 22 Tories voted against charges for dental check-ups and eye tests. Then on Monday 38 Tories voted for Col. Mates's "loyal amendment" to link the poll tax to ability to pay. One MP (C, Anon) commented that in the debate on the social security changes Social Services Secretary **John Moore**'s "*performance was so poor, I thought he might have to resign.*"



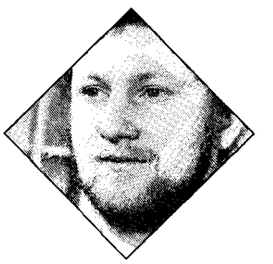
Robert McCrindle (C, Brentwood) on the social security changes: "*Elderly people accumulate savings so that they can afford a few luxuries in their later years of life. It is surely little wonder that they feel thrift is being discouraged — because the only conclusion they can reach is that the government is expecting them to use capital accumulated over a long period of time to save the government money. That cannot be right.*"



Michael Carttiss (C, Great Yarmouth) on NHS charges: "*This is quite the most miserable and petty idea that this government has introduced. The front bench have made a grave mistake. I very much hope there is still time to reconsider the proposal. If we fail to express our concern, my hon. Friends may be putting forward next year and the year after further charges for other examinations.*"



Jerry Hayes (C, Harlow) on NHS charges: "*This is not just a stupid decision, it is a wrong decision. The electorate will forgive governments quite a bit — but if we start messing around with their health and eyesight, there will not be a lot of forgiveness.*"



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Winston Churchill (C, Davyhulme) on NHS charges: "*I'm not prepared to see my constituents' health and indeed lives gambled with in this way. It is unacceptable the way the government has attempted to bulldoze this measure through, taking no account of very strong representations on this side.*"

unfair. Prince Charles does not need me to defend him. What does Norman want? Would he wish the Prince to behave as if he were one of Queen Victoria's wicked uncles or his great uncle David, before whom no nightclub remained unvisited? Norman Tebbit was not the only prominent Tory to be invited onto *Panorama* to comment on its programme about the Prince of Wales. But he alone was daft enough to have accepted the invitation.

Will it be Kenneth Baker? He is at least untainted by Thatcherism. His Educational Reform Bill may have offended the teachers, but it has proved popular elsewhere. Baker is in the happy position for a left-wing Conservative of doing something of which the centre and right of the party approves. He can also read and write. Were Mrs Thatcher to

Michael Heseltine (C, Henley) on the poll tax: "*Those who will suffer most will be council tenants who have bought their homes, the self-employed and the thrifty who have saved for their retirement. If there is a pivotal point at which the political pendulum is hinged, it is that group which have lifted themselves not to great wealth but clear of dependence on the state and into a position of self-reliance. It is precisely these people who will be hit.*"

go to Dulwich before the next election, the contest could be between Baker and Sir Geoffrey Howe.

The Foreign Secretary has an interest in making friends with bus drivers. Were Mrs Thatcher to be knocked down, Geoffrey would pick up the pieces. Howe is on the traditional right of the Conservative Party, where decency is placed above doctrine and sensitivity above resolution. He has been described both as "the nicest man in Europe" and also "the dullest". If he is dull it is only when he speaks. Geoffrey Howe is just the man for a doctor's mandate. Were Howe to succeed Mrs Thatcher it would be like switching channels: *Far*

George Young (C, Ealing) on the poll tax: "*This Bill without the new clause commits the very crime of which our opponents accuse us and we have no alibi. It transmits money from the poor to the rich.*"

from the Madding Crowd in place of *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* But time is not on Geoffrey's side.

Just as the poll tax is an attempt to make the working class pay for local government, the "Fowler" reforms of the Welfare State are an attempt to save money on welfare: money both in the short, and more particularly in the long, term. Despite the rationalisations which have been on offer — simplification and redirection of benefits onto the more deserving — the motive behind the changes remains fiscal. £500 million pounds will be saved. In the same way the charges on dental and optical examination can only increase the burden on the less well off. The alarums and excursions of recent weeks reveal all too plainly the anxieties which are held by many traditional Tories. It is a pity there are not more of us. We can only look now to the House of Lords. □

Julian Critchley is the Conservative MP for Aldershot.

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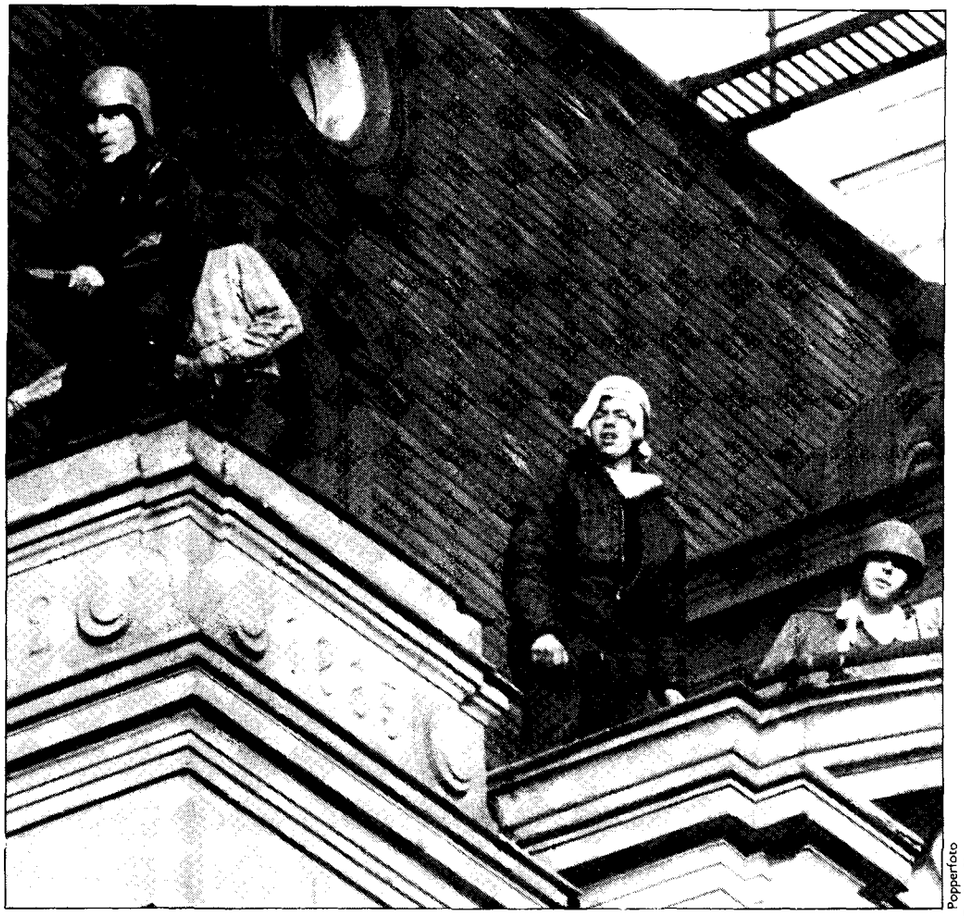
The fire last time



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A 1968 anniversary industry is springing up; but, argues* PAUL FOOT, *it takes a revolutionary to ask the most illuminating questions about that revolutionary time

A CONSIDERABLE industry has been at work for months to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of 1968. Numerous books have already been published, and the television interest reaches its climax soon with an extravaganza on Channel 4. The popular theme is that 1968 was an aberration, a momentary delirium which seduced the youth of the time, but out of which that youth have grown up into sensible middle age. The books and programmes tend to concentrate on the cultural obsessions of the 1968 students, their incantations, promiscuities, drugs. Like an eclipse on a 29 February in Leap Year, such a strange and rather disturbing Happening is unlikely ever to occur again. (Sighs of relief all round.)

Most of this is entirely trivial, and suits the prevailing reactionary mood. No important person today wants to dredge up too much about what really happened in 1968 — a revolutionary tremor which threatened an earthquake to bring the entire Old Order crashing down.

Why did it happen, what were its effects, when did it stop, and will it happen again? No one on the official left will even ask the questions. It takes an active revolutionary in what will unquestionably be the least-reviewed book in the pack to answer them.*

Chris Harman locates the cause of the 1968 upheavals in the "long boom" in which the postwar industrialised economies basked. The boom, however, was a creature of capitalism every bit as much as the slumps of the 1930s. Its fruits were not shared either by workers or by the growing body of students it required and regimented. During the "long boom", workers and students developed at the same time a collective confidence and a collective frustration. These burst out all over the world in 1968. The triggers were different — America's monstrous war in Vietnam, the meanness of the universities in France, religious discrimination in Northern Ireland. But the fundamental causes were the same everywhere.

For a moment, the 1968 revolutions rubbed out the contours of world politics. The "Cold War", the "Iron Curtain" were irrelevant to the new insurgents. Just as Mayor Daley was ordering troops to beat up demonstrators against a rigged Democratic Party convention in Chicago, the Russian government sent its tanks into Prague. The aims were the same: to quash revolts — revolts which for a moment revealed that the "socialism of the 'socialist world' was as phoney as the freedom of the 'free world'." The absurd slogans and antagonisms with which governments and ideologues East and West had bamboozled their peoples were suddenly ripped up as effectively as were the Paris paving stones by the students of the Sorbonne. The thrilling message of emancipation in the Czech manifesto "2000 words" was written with the same inspiration (though in more exciting prose) as were thousands of manifestos issued by demonstrating students in Warsaw, London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Chicago.

The second crucial characterisation of the time was that students' revolt set off workers' revolt. The most convulsive example was in France, which, in sharp contrast to the predictions of every known political scientist, left and right, experienced that May the largest general strike in the history of the world.

The revolutionary impact of 1968 went on long after the calendar year — through the "hot autumn" in Italy in 1969, to the miners' and dockers' strikes in Britain in 1972 (which changed the Tory government's entire strategy and eventually kicked them out), to the Portuguese revolution in 1974, to the overthrow of the Greek colonels in 1975. Right across Europe, and beyond it, the revolutionary upheavals of 1968 went on until 1976, and threatened the very existence of "society as we know it".

How was order restored — how are we now back

The forces of revolution (above) and reaction (below) clash, Paris 1968. The explosive mix which gave rise to 1968 is still bubbling away . . .

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with "society as we know it", even more ugly, cruel and complacent than it was before? At times (in Britain at the end of 1973, for instance, or in France in May 1968) the ruling class, even with all its troops and policemen, were weak (in France the police went on strike). By themselves they could not restore their own laws and orders. Their chief allies in that business were the Old Order of the left, whether of the communist or Labour variety. Communist tanks in Prague broke up the revolution there, and, by the same token, Communist-led trade unions in France persuaded public service workers back to work, and so broke up the general strike. In the United States, the politicians of the Democratic Party, in Britain the politicians of the Labour Party laid their "historic" claim to the loyalty of workers and students, and called them to order. This was known at the time in different languages as the: "social contract" (Britain) the Pact of Moncloa (Spain), or the Historic Compromise (Italy). It took the sting out of the 1968 revolution and its aftermath. Once the sting was out, the right wing lost interest in the Old Order of the left which had done its work so well. The political pendulum swung to the right, to the "free market", against the welfare state — to the fattening of the rich and the slimming of the poor; to Thatcher in Britain, to Reagan in the United States, to Kohl in West Germany, to Chirac in France. The office-hunters of the left, who helped lose the revolutions, lost office as well.

> *"Right across Europe the revolutionary upheavals of 1968 threatened the very existence of "society as we know it"."*

The revolutions of 1968-1976 threw up new revolutionary ideas and organisations which could not see any fundamental difference between the social orders on either side of the Iron Curtain, and which doubted that society could be changed by electing new governments, while industry, finance, law, media, all the other big institutions of society remained in the (wholly undemocratic) hands of the wealthy. Chris Harman traces the history of these organisations, many of which disappeared in frantic gestures of individual terrorism or in incantations to the "Third World". He argues, however, and he is right, that the spirit of 1968 and the small organisations which it inspired were and are the only real hope for socialist change.

The steady drift of former socialists to the right (for a wonderful example read Paul Johnson's "conversion" to the Revolution — in the *New Statesman* of course), the fashion for "new realism", the obsession with parliamentary politics, all these are creatures of the prevailing reaction, not enemies of it. Nor is that reaction half so secure as it pretends. The slump of the eighties is not as deep as the slump of the thirties, but it is every bit as intractable. The first was ended in a world war, but a world war now is out of the question, even for the generals.

The mix which gave rise to 1968 is still bubbling in the pot. It will explode in a "fire next time" which will engulf the world just as unexpectedly as it did last time, and the politics of the traditional left will be just as useless and just as hostile. □

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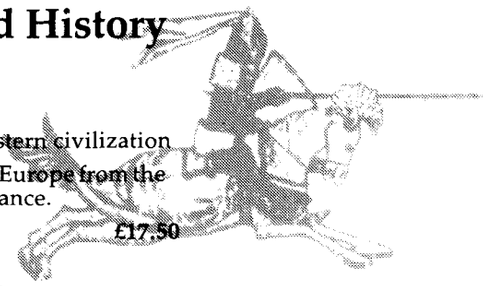

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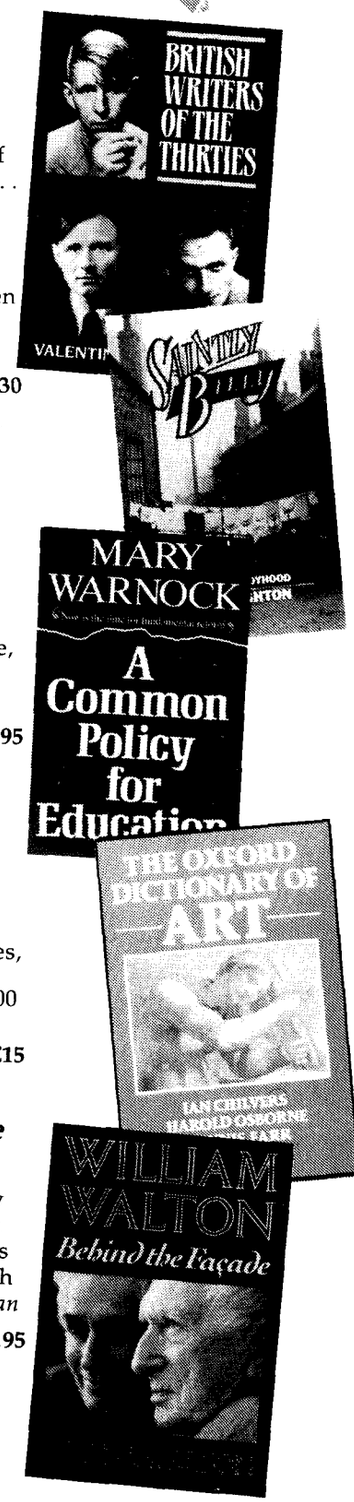

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John Rentoul

The Ridley case against the poll tax

THE REASON it is called the "community charge", Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley wearily explains, is because it is a charge for services. The Conservatives want to get away from the idea that local councils are "local governments" and that the revenues they raise are "local taxes". What they want are service providers, Wandsworth plc or Westminster Asset Strippers Inc, which raise money by charging for their services.

It is a feeble argument, one to which the government has been driven by the multiple illogicalities of its most unpopular measure. But it is the only argument the government has left. If it is wrong, the poll tax is exposed for what it really is: another shift of the tax burden from the rich to the poor.

So let's forget about "ability to pay" for a moment. Let us assume for the sake of argument that the poll tax is not a tax. Let us pretend local councils are simply contractors for services. Which more closely resembles a charge for the services actually used by local electors: a poll tax or the rates?

Funny you should ask, because Glen Bramley and Julian Le Grand, of the School for Advanced Urban Studies at Bristol University, have just finished an early analysis of a unique survey carried out by Cheshire County Council (for which Le Grand was a consultant). This is the first time a local council has systematically tried to find out who uses — and who pays for — its services. And it proves, for the first time, that better-off households enjoy more of the benefit of council services than poorer households. They also pay higher rates because they live in more expensive houses. So, if the government wants people to pay for the services they use without actually charging fees for local authority schools, installing toll booths on the roads and putting turnstiles in the parks, the rates are a better "community charge" than the poll tax.

On its own arguments, the government should now issue an apology to Tory rebel Michael Mates for defeating his amendment on Monday, abandon the Scottish poll tax experiment and replace the rates with a combined property tax and local income tax.

THE CHESHIRE survey asked a large, representative sample of households detailed questions about their use of the county council's services. People were asked what schools their children went to, how much they used their car if they had one, how much they used the buses, how often they went to libraries, museums and parks and whether they used any of the council's social services.

Education is easily the most important local council service, and outside the big cities it is provided by the county councils. Cheshire spends over half its budget on education. And its benefits are skewed towards the better off, because the children of professional and managerial persons are so much more likely to stay on after the age of 16. Cheshire spends £40 million a year on sixth-form and further education, and professional and managerial households obtain three-and-a-half times as much of the benefit per household as do the households of semi- and un-skilled manual workers.

Of course, the benefits of education *before* the age of 16 are spread more evenly, because all children are required by law to enjoy them. But spending on 16+ education dramatically tilts the overall balance in favour of the better off, because it accounts for one-fifth of Cheshire's education budget and one-tenth of its total spending. In addition, professional and managerial households use adult education services twice as much as semi- and un-skilled manual workers.

The other big item of council spending from which the better-off profit disproportionately is the free provision of roads. Bramley and Le Grand calculate that people in the highest social group use roads in their own cars three times as much as people in the lowest social group in Cheshire. They allocate the council's £29 million highways budget on this basis. Then they consider the council's £6 million subsidy to the bus services; this favours the less well-off, but not nearly enough to outweigh the greater benefits enjoyed by private car owners.

> *'We knew the poll tax was regressive, but not that it will be a direct subsidy of the rich by the poor'*

It is the same story with "leisure services": the average professional or managerial household uses libraries twice as much as one in the lowest social group; they also use museums more than one-and-a-half times as much, and visit country parks nearly three times as much. The picture of the middle class family Average out for a spin in its brand-new saloon, taking in a visit to the museum and picking up some library books for well-educated and well-scrubbed children on the way home may seem like a 1930s idyll out of a Ladybird book. The reality may never have been so wholesome, but it is still broadly true.

The only substantial area of council spending that benefits the less well-off more than the rest is social services (£39 million, or 10 per cent of the total budget). And even here, social workers are used quite a lot by middle class households.

When Bramley and Le Grand added up total council spending per household, they found that the average household in the top social group receives nearly twice as much as one in the bottom group. So if the government wants to match what people pay with what they use, professional households should pay about twice as much as households in the lowest group. "It so happens," they report, "that in Cheshire at least this is almost exactly what the rates system does."

With the poll tax, of course, how much a household pays depends on how many adults it contains — so there will be little difference in the poll tax paid by different social classes, despite their differing use of services.

AH, THE SCEPTIC might say, but is Cheshire typical? There is no reason to think that it isn't. Patterns of spending are quite similar across the shire counties. As a county council, however, Cheshire is not responsible for housing or refuse collection, two of the main responsibilities of district councils. But council housing is currently only paid for out of the rates in a few areas — soon it will all be self-financing, and indeed in some boroughs council rents already subsidise the rates. And the benefits of refuse collection are also biased towards the better-off: in spacious middle class suburbs the cost of collection is likely to be higher than in high-density working class areas.

What Bramley and Le Grand leave out of their analysis are poll tax rebates, on the grounds that they are part of the social security system. Nicholas Ridley's "concession" to the Tory rebels last week means that one person in four will pay less. The low-paid will only pay part of their poll tax, the unemployed will only pay the minimum 20 per cent of their poll tax, and both are likely to be concentrated among the manual working classes.

This means that, at the lower end of the scale, poll tax payments may be a little closer to matching the benefits of council spending — although no closer than rates, for which there is also a rebates system. But rebates aren't given on the grounds that the poor don't use council services so much, they're given on the grounds of "ability to pay" — those discredited grounds that the government wants to get away from. Nor does this Alice-in-Wonderland logic apply to the top end of the scale. Professional and managerial households are both better able to pay *and* they use services more than the other three classes. So what are the government's arguments for undercharging *them*?

Even though Bramley and Le Grand's work is at an early stage, its central finding couldn't be clearer. The poll tax cannot be regarded as a charge for services — a "community charge". The Poll Tax Minister, Michael Howard, claimed on *This Week Next Week* on Sunday that one of the purposes of the poll tax was to get the message across that "services have to be paid for, you don't get services for free". But when the poll tax comes in the better-off will — precisely — get services for free. We knew the poll tax was regressive — that it will take a larger share of poor people's income than of rich people's. What we didn't know was that it will be a direct subsidy of the rich by the poor. This is what J.K. Galbraith last year called the "revolt of the rich against the poor", with a vengeance. □

A paper detailing the preliminary analysis of the Cheshire survey is available from Glen Bramley or Julian Le Grand, School for Advanced Urban Studies, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol BS8 4EA.

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Belfast street talk

In the tumult of responses to events from the Gibraltar killings to the murder of two British soldiers in Andersonstown, the voices of ordinary people have been conspicuously absent.

SALLY BELFRAGE *talks to people all over Belfast*

"IT WAS pretty bad for a time there," people say all over Belfast about the events of the last month. But the parochialism of trauma in Northern Ireland is such that *what*, exactly, was "pretty bad" depends on where you are.

Having just come from England where every spare ounce of outrage was reserved for the mob murder of the two soldiers in Andersonstown, it was a surprise to find the event never mentioned — spontaneously at any rate — in Andersonstown itself. A new plaque on one of the estate's entrances, listing 26 names of local people killed in these troubles ("They were faithful and they fought") was to be taken down for Mairead Farrell's name to be added.

A much beloved local heroine, her death in Gibraltar is still freshly mourned by all. "She was such a part of Andersonstown. The whole place was devastated. I can't describe the feeling." "It was a worse feeling than the hunger strike." "Doesn't it make you feel a coward when a wee girl of 30 has to go and die for ya?"

As her beatification proceeds, people list her qualities: intelligence, generosity, originality, warmth. "You know you get a lot of crap said about everybody after they die, but in this case it's 100 per cent true." No one knew that since her release from prison she had again become "involved". Her own mother thought she'd gone to Spain for a holiday. But on the day her body went past, many houses flew black flags outside —

> "Do you have a black flag?"
> "Sure I made it out of an old skirt."

— and the army went around taking down their names.

In another Andersonstown household they talk about having gone down to Milltown cemetery the day Mairead was buried with the other two Gibraltar dead, and of the three further deaths of friends shot by loyalist Michael Stone. The three had been among those who chose to chase Stone after he began lobbing grenades. Those talking, also not "involved", had been among 10,000 mourners that day, but the crowd was so crushing they'd been unable to get in the gates. Now they, as everyone, speculate about whether they would have been among Stone's pursuers or with the ones crouched behind tombstones. "You never know until the moment how you'd act."

The other matter troubling Andersonstown was the impending social security changes, since hardly anyone is employed. "People face six to ten pounds less a week — makes a difference between Sunday dinner and no Sunday dinner." But "she gets away with it sure" and, when told that even the *Brits* are suffering, "What are they gurnin' about if they're going to vote her in again?"

Mike Abrahams/Network

"They were faithful and they fought"

Never touched upon until asked about was the death of the soldiers not 500 yards away. "They shouldn't have shot the two soldiers," one man said, "because it took away what happened in the graveyard." His wife was quite annoyed to have the subject brought up. "We are sick of somehow being made to feel guilty about it or responsible for a war we didn't start." And, wearily, "But even in the morning if the Brits pulled out you've still the Orangies to deal with." Last year or the year before you didn't hear much about the Orangies.

Meanwhile "Orangie" concerns are quite different. "What about the latest events?" I asked a loyalist. "Good fun," he said. "A good clear-out." It turned out he was referring to the UDA, his sole interpretation of the question, and what the paramilitary group would amount to after John McMichael's car-bomb murder and Andy Tyrie's resignation.

Some people say the changes represent less "a good clear-out" than a free hand to hardcore gangsters who go in for embezzling and extortion, but also for random massacres of Catholics. Said one: "Since Enniskillen there is less concern than ever about whether the victim is strictly speaking a Provo."

The new loyalist folk hero is Michael Stone, now known as "Rambo". All over the walls is written THREE TAIGS WITH ONE STONE. An anonymous poem is circulating:

> Hold your head up "Rambo", keep your high hand low,
> Steady your aim, live up to your name, for there's fifty more to go.
> Hold your hand up "Rambo", and lob another grenade,
> Let's show them all, as your enemies fall, that an Ulsterman's never afraid.
> You have five more grenades to deliver, and there's plenty more shots in your gun,
> Take your time now don't even quiver, there's 10,000 of them on the run.
> Just show then that you're taking over,
> You're a man in a million, it's true,
> Hold your head up "Rambo" all of Ulster is routing [sic] for you.
> Gerry Adams is crouched behind women, with a face that is whitened like chalk.
> And McGuinness (*sic*) from Derry is shaking so badly he can't even squawk,
> Alex Maskey has dirted his trousers, never saw such a thing in his life.
> Danny Morrison made a quick exit and was seen running home to his wife.
> Hold your head up "Rambo", for the odds are 10,000 to 1,
> Empty the lot, give 'em all that you've got,
> Just you finish what you have begun.
> Hold your head up "Rambo" it's the 16th of March '88,
> And your brave deed today against Sinn Fein/IRA
> Puts you top of the heap, *boy you're great*!!!

As in Andersonstown, there is no unsolicited comment on the soldiers' deaths, though when asked they come up with a new twist. "Some of the loyalists think that the police deliberately refrained from intervening," said one, "because they, too, believed at first that the two men were loyalists, and that they could be taught a lesson. And," he added ominously, "loyalist fighters won't be forgettin' it next time they have a brush with the law."

"Yes, it was pretty bad for a time there," they say.

"It's over?"

"Well, it's stopped getting worse." □

Sally Belfrage's "The Crack: A Belfast Year" has just been published in paperback (Grafton, £3.95).

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Lappland: living with nuclear fallout

Two years on from the accident at Chernobyl nuclear power station, the memory seems to be fading. But, as* MARTIN LINTON *reports, it remains a reality for the Sami people of Lappland

WHEN THE ALARM went off in the middle of the night in a nuclear power station 100 miles north of Stockholm, the station manager could not understand why. There had been no accident. There was no leak. But the level of radiation was high. So he called in scientists from FOA, the research institute of the Swedish ministry of defence.

By morning FOA established that the radiation which triggered the alarm came from another power station, that it had been carried by a raincloud and that the cloud had come, working backwards through weather reports, from southern Russia. That was how the world first heard about Chernobyl.

That is nearly two years ago now and the memory is beginning to fade. Unfortunately radiation does not fade as quickly. Caesium 137, the most important element in the Chernobyl fallout, has a half-life of 30 years. It will not be down to half its initial strength until 2016. And the health risk for humans does not recede as time passes. It increases. It depends not on the amount of radiation in the ground, which is declining, but on the dose in the human body, which is accumulating.

At first, many scientists predicted that in practice caesium would be washed into the soil after the first winter and there would be far less contamination in the food chain by the second year. They talked of a "biological" half life of three or four years. That has not happened.

Chance

Last autumn FOA scientists were out in the forests of northern Sweden, rechecking radiation levels where they had been measured straight after Chernobyl. They measured caesium at several control points in a forest 50 miles west of Umea, taking care to find the exact square metre of ground where readings were taken before. Results were not encouraging. The radiation had come down by no more than a tenth, from a level that was very high to one that was still very high. The levels of around 40,000 becquerels contrast with the highest level of caesium recorded in Britain: 6,500 (at a farm near Barrow in Cumbria a week after Chernobyl); the average even in the worst affected areas such as Cumbria and North Wales was never more than 2,000.

Distance had nothing to do with it. This part of Sweden is 1,200 miles from Chernobyl (only 100 miles closer than Britain), yet it has suffered more than any other area outside the immediate disaster zone. It now has more radiation than Kiev, just 40 miles from Chernobyl. This is a result of two chance factors. The first is meteorological. The wind direction in the days following the disaster carried the contaminated raincloud to northern Scandinavia and then by a roundabout route to Cumbria and North Wales. The second is botanical. Radiation clings to some plants far longer than others.

Grass loses radiation relatively quickly. FOA scientists tested a village green just two miles from the forest — there the caesium count had dropped from 24,000 becquerels to 12,000, a biological half life of only one year. But there were wide variations even on this small green. The Chernobyl radiation fell in late April on snow and was then deposited unevenly on the ground as the snow thawed. On one spot the scintillation detector started clicking wildly and shot up from 15 microroentgens per hour to 460. Probably someone had piled the snow, or made a snowman, on that particular spot and this had concentrated the radiation.

But the problem is that forest plants lose radiation very slowly. The radiophysicist from FOA who carried out the tests, Dr Lennart Johansson, expects the "biological" half-life of the caesium to be 15 years in the forest. In other words Chernobyl will still be contaminating food well into the next century. A limit of 300 becquerels per kilo for all food was set after Chernobyl, but so much food had to be thrown away that a two-tier system was introduced last year: 300 becquerels for ordinary food and a new limit of 1,500 becquerels per kilo for forest foods such as wild berries, reindeer and game. (The British limit is 1,000 bq per kilo for all foods.)

Despite this, many foods were still above the higher limit last year. Bilberries were between 1,000 and 1,500, but wild mushrooms were much higher and cloudberries, the great delicacy of the mountains, were up to 18,000. The animals that live on these plants had correspondingly high levels. Deer were up to 9,000 bq per kilo and an elk killed in the autumn hunt was at 14,000. Freshwater fish were actually higher than the year before. Fish are able to concentrate caesium in the water — fishing in these areas came to an abrupt halt.

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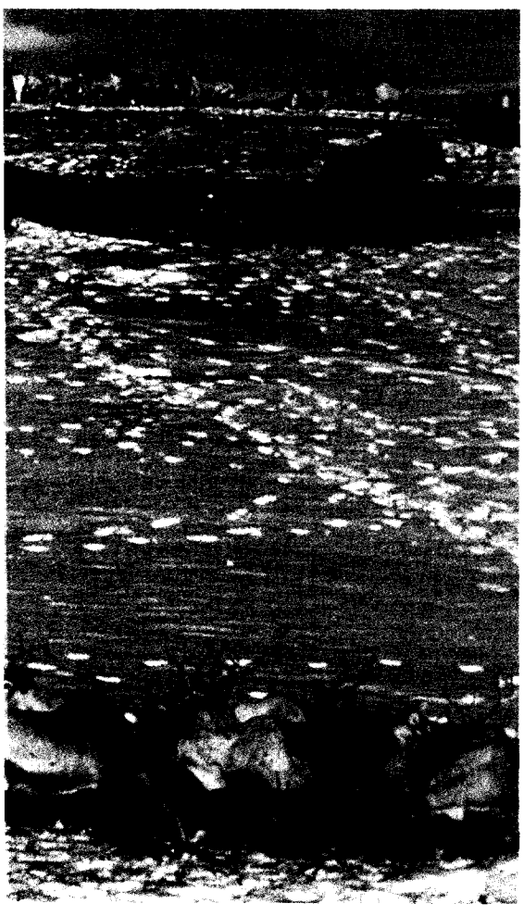

The traditional herders' life (left) may soon be a thing of the past, superseded by non-radioactive supermarkets (above)

This came as a nasty surprise to food inspectors. "We had expected the caesium to be significantly lower in 1987, but there doesn't seem to be any great difference from the summer of 1986," says Margareta Widell of the National Food Administration.

None of this would matter too much if it were not for *cladonia stellaris*, a lichen that covers the forest floors. The individual plant is very delicate and beautiful, like a miniaturised tree, and is used by Swedes to decorate their windows in winter. But it could almost have been designed as a radiation trap. It has a large surface area and absorbs food from the air, has no roots and grows for 30 years. It is also, unfortunately, the staple winter food for reindeer.

Reindeer now have little radiation in their summer pastures in the mountains. But as soon as they come down to the forests for the winter and start eating lichen, their radiation count soars, making their meat unfit for sale. In the year of Chernobyl government inspectors had to condemn 70,000 of the 100,000 reindeer killed in the annual slaughters. The meat was dyed blue and some sold to Finnish fur farms for mink feed. But most of the carcasses were buried in mass graves. Even the antlers had to be buried because they contained too much radiation.

Last year it was hoped the slaughter would be much lower. And so it was in the summer. But optimism evaporated as soon as the reindeer moved down into the forests. In September 200 were brought for slaughter in Abelvattnet — 199 had to be condemned. In Vilhelmina every single reindeer had to be destroyed.

Traditionally there is another slaughter in February to keep the herders and their families in food until the end of the long northern winter in May. But last year this produced carcasses with staggeringly high becquerel counts of 20,000, in some cases up to 50,000, per kilo, so this year it was abandoned.

This has been a bitter blow for the reindeer herders. They are all Lapps, or Sami, as they prefer to be called, and follow a tradition that goes back thousands of years. The reindeer slaughter is central to their lives. It provides them with meat which is their main food, with skins for bedding and antlers for carving.

The government has offered them what is, on paper at least, a fair deal. The slaughterhouse pays the market price for all reindeer. If they are over the limit, the government pays and disposes of them, so herders are no worse off. In some areas they are paid £50 for extra freezer space so they can store more meat for the winter.

Worse off

But it has not been as simple as that. The Sami are not like EEC farmers, happy to produce food that has to be destroyed. They were deeply depressed that their reindeer had been made worthless, inedible, by an accident 1,200 miles away. Many thought of giving up reindeer herding or emigrating. The Sami also believe the deal leaves them worse off, whatever the government may say. If the reindeer are condemned they get the money, but it is taxed; they can use the money to buy reindeer meat in the shops, but this costs much more than their own killed meat.

The Sami *are* safety conscious, going to great lengths to avoid giving condemned meat to children or pregnant women. But there is no doubt that many consume their own untested reindeer. Results of whole body scans of 100 Sami volunteers at Umea university showed caesium counts of 16,000 becquerels — in one 20-year-old herder it was 100,000, compared to a national average of 2,000.

Policy in both Sweden and the UK is that members of the public should not receive more than one millisievert (mSv) of human-made radiation a year on average. In practice most people in the affected areas have exceeded this dose. The Swedish Radiological Protection Board estimated that people in wooden houses working mainly out of doors, which includes the Sami, got 4.0 mSv.

They also assumed that everyone received 1 mSv last year from food. But that is based on the national average consumption of reindeer meat, one kilo a year. In fact people in Stockholm eat smoked reindeer in tiny quantities in cocktail snacks while many in the north, especially the Sami, eat almost no other meat.

Dr Johansson presented a study last summer based on a more realistic case. It assumed a Sami would eat 50 kilos of reindeer meat a year containing 5,000 becquerels a kilo as well as some elk meat and fish that was over the limit. Projecting this forward 50 years, he calculated that the Sami would absorb a lifetime dose of 64 mSv.

He also worked out an extreme case, based on a study in Finland in 1965 which found that Sami could eat 200 kilos of reindeer meat a year. Some say it isn't possible to eat that amount of meat, but the Sami insist it is. He imagined what would happen if a Sami ate this quantity of untested meat at 20,000 becquerels per kilo. He projected it forward over 50 years allowing the caesium to

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Mass graves for contaminated elk meat, five months after Chernobyl. Now, the levels are still high

decline slowly on a "biological" half life of 15 years and allowing for radiation from other sources as well.

In this case the Sami would absorb 838 mSv — an exceptionally high dose. Chromosome damage can be detected, for instance, at 100 mSv. The level at which blood changes occur is 200 mSv. And the level at which evacuation would take place after an accident is 500 mSv. But 838 mSv would still be well short of a fatal dose. According to present medical and scientific knowledge, it would increase the risk of death from cancer by about 2 per cent. That is the extreme case. The realistic case would increase the Sami's risk of death by between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent. Statistically this means that between one in 50 and one in 500 of the reindeer herders in these areas could die from eating their own reindeer meat.

Dr Johansson argues that this is a risk that can and should be largely avoided by restricting slaughter to the summer months. But he acknowledges that it is not easy for the Sami to change their lifestyle overnight and thinks that overstating the risk can probably do more damage. "If one is going to advise people to change their lifestyle, one has to consider what they would be changing to. If they stop eating reindeer they might start eating food with fats and additives. If they stopped reindeer herding, they might move to the city where they would run into greater risks."

The Sami feel the same way. They are angry at the risk that caesium poses to their lives, but even angrier at the threat that the fear of caesium is posing to their very survival. It is a bitter injustice to them that the ultimate accident of modern industrial technology, Chernobyl, should threaten the one people in Europe who still live in harmony with nature and the environment. "We have been here for thousands of years but have left the mountains and lakes and forests exactly as they were. We haven't destroyed or polluted them. That's because we live with nature, not against it," says Aasa Blind, a Sami teacher.

Nowadays the Sami are no longer nomadic. They may live in traditional kotas in the summer, but in winter they live in houses with central heating and freezers for the reindeer meat. They hire helicopters to herd deer and lorries to transport them. But they are the last community in Europe to still live essentially by hunting and herding.

The Sami have set up a worldwide organisation to protect the rights of indigenous people like themselves: the Inuit in Greenland, the Indians in North, Central and South America, the Aborigines in Australia. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples held its first conference in Kiruna in Lappland in 1977 and has since met in Peru and Ottawa, developing its own kind of liberation politics that identifies not so much, for instance, with Nicaragua as with the Misquito Indians in Nicaragua. The Sami have become more liberation-minded, adopting their own name for Lappland, Sápmi, and a national flag. Some of their politicians have even demanded autonomy from the four "colonising" powers, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union. At the time of Chernobyl, the Alaskan Indians offered to ship crates of wild berries and caribou meat to the Sami. But this act of international solidarity fell foul of customs regulations.

Although only 2,500 of Sweden's 17,000 Sami are classified as reindeer herders, it is central to their culture. Even for Sami doctors and lawyers the village is their spiritual home. "Sami culture begins with the reindeer. In some ways it would also end with the reindeer, because all Sami culture comes from the reindeer. It keeps us together," says Kjell Marainen of the Sami youth movement, Saminuorra. "The problem is that young Sami who don't know if they want to carry on with reindeer herding may be deterred by Chernobyl. At first it seemed very dark and everyone said it was the end. But I think we've got past that. One of our leaders said that anyone who gives up reindeer herding because of Chernobyl is not a true Sami and that is the mood now."

Going soft

Marianne Nutti, a Swede married to a Sami, fears that her son's generation may "go soft" and lose the stamina they need for reindeer-herding. She tries to keep every aspect of the culture alive in her household. "There is so little left that you can't take one bit away or there will be too little left. You can't take the language, or the crafts, or the reindeer. It's all so vulnerable," she says. She lives through the summer in a wigwam-like kota, sleeping on a mattress of birch twigs and elk hides. But many don't.

The Sami are engaged in a battle for survival against enormous odds, but there are some signs that they may be winning. Attendance at the Sami school in Gallivare, which fell to only nine at one point, is now back up to 31, including a nursery where the children speak only Sami. Until ten or 15 years ago most Sami wanted their children to speak only Swedish, but that is changing. "Parents are much prouder of their language now. They have understood that we are just as good as the others so they want their children to come here," says Aasa Blind, a teacher at the school.

What keeps the Sami going is a different attitude to life. "It's another mentality, an oriental way of looking at things," says Marianne Nutti. "My friends in the south of Sweden have very high incomes. But high incomes don't buy very much up here. You don't need expensive holidays, because you're up in the mountains all summer and you're skiing all winter. You don't need to buy any meat because you hunt and fish. Westerners get impatient if they have to wait half an hour. But a Sami will be quite happy to wait for a week for a snowstorm to pass or to walk 30 miles without eating."

Marianne Nutti has adopted Sami attitudes, even if they make her late for her job as a domestic science teacher at the Gallivare sixth form college. "Every morning I brush my teeth in a valley that is 35 million years old and think to myself: What am I in a rush for?"

The valley will be there for another 35 million years, but it would only take another accident, another Chernobyl, another forest cut down in the name of progress, to blow out the small candle-flame of Sami culture. □

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EXILES

Tibetan stories

High up on the mountain slopes of northern India,* JONATHAN MIRSKY *visited the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile and heard first-hand accounts of the Lhasa riots

DURING HIS recent visit to Britain the Dalai Lama spoke in detail about Tibet. Can he really be in touch with a region he fled in 1959? He lives, after all, in Macleod Ganj, a village high above Dharamsala in northern India, six hours by jeep from the nearest airport, and so out of the way that Delhi newspapers are a day or two late, telexes break down, and getting through on the phone can take more than a day.

Peking is exasperated with the Dalai Lama's claim to know what is happening in a Tibet he has not seen for almost 30 years. It accuses him of being a criminal and a "splittist", wilfully unaware of what China has done to raise what its Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian, during his recent visit to London, called "Tibet's rather low cultural level".

But since the Lhasa riots of October and March it has been driven into the minds of some Chinese that this is not true, that few Tibetans regard China as "the motherland", and that the persecution and destruction of the first three decades of the occupation will never be forgiven, despite the relative relaxation of the last six years.

A true understanding of the realities is denied to the occupiers. The Chinese invaded the region in 1950; even now few of them know Tibetan and fewer still know Tibetans who will tell them the truth. They are therefore deprived of the secret of the Dalai Lama's up-to-date knowledge — which is no secret.

Every day he receives in individual or group audience the newest travellers from Tibet, some fleeing forever, some coming as pilgrims and then reluctantly returning, still others — foreigners — fresh from a few weeks or a month or two's travel. Some of the foreigners witnessed the March disorders which the Chinese now concede involved 10,000 people, about one seventh of the population of Lhasa, or perhaps almost a third if one excludes the Chinese residents.

'We'll meet again in Tibet'

Two weeks ago I spent five days in Macleod Ganj. Seat of the government-in-exile, it is an almost entirely Tibetan place, where the Dalai Lama lives in a long low yellow bungalow, of the style left over from the Raj when senior officials came to the hills to beat the heat. Nearby is the modest temple where the Dalai Lama conducts teachings and the grove in which monks blow their long horns and listen to the echoes bounce off the mountain slopes.

On my second day I went up to the exiled-government enclosure. The Indians provide security. A turbaned sentry with a fixed bayonet saluted me and I was frisked by a motherly officer in a sari. I followed a straggle of 200 pilgrims up the hill to the bungalow where the Dalai Lama suddenly appeared on his porch. The pilgrims fell flat on their faces and burst into tears. Then each crouched in front of the Dalai Lama, who raised them up, gave them little packets of blessed medicine and sacred red strings for them to wind round their necks. Finally he delivered a friendly talk, ending with "We'll all meet again in Tibet."

Afterwards the pilgrims told me some of them had walked up to six weeks for that moment. But they said too that they had each been asked to tell emissaries of the Dalai Lama what conditions were like in their towns and villages. Most of them live in places the carefully guided tour groups do not see, where the temples and monasteries, 98 per cent of which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, have not been gaudily restored and re-imaged by the Chinese to give foreigners the impression that religion is once more practised in Tibet. And despite China's claims that millions of modernising dollars have been poured into "feudal" Tibet, these pilgrims describe how it is the Chinese administrative centre or garrison in each town which alone receives the new electricity and running water.

Men and women riot in Lhasa, October 1987 AP

Down in the school run by the Dalai Lama's sister I met nine-year-old Sonam. He is a broad-chested boy, with the typically Tibetan brown skin and chapped red cheeks which distinguish those who have only recently arrived in Dharamsala from those who live there.

Sonam had been brought by his farmer father to Lhasa in late September to visit his two monk brothers. His mother and nine other children stayed in their village, two hours by truck from Lhasa.

On 1 October the first great anti-Chinese uprising for years rocked Lhasa. By the end of the day something like a dozen Tibetans had been shot dead by security police and many more arrested. It took the Chinese weeks to admit that anyone had been shot and then only by claiming the police had fired in the air and the ricochets killed two people. (Numbers of foreigners, such as London's Robby Barnett, were in the crowds and saw the police fire into them, and the American photographer Steve Lehmann took pictures of the shooting.) But Sonam watched the whole violent day, including the killing of one of his brothers and the shooting of the other, who tried to shield him with his body. Photographs show him walking beside the board on which his dead brother was carried away by the crowd.

Sonam's father feared — correctly — that the security police would scrutinise their own videos of the crowd and make arrests. The next day he hired two places in the truck which drove three days to the Nepalese border, and handed his son over to the first Tibetans he saw crossing over. They took Sonam to Dharamsala, where he told the Dalai Lama what he had seen. He has had no news of his family. To me he said that his ambition was to return to Tibet some day "to kill the Chinese".

The next day I spoke to 29-year-old Jamyang, a truck driver from near Lhasa, whose father, a soldier in the Dalai Lama's army, had died in a Chinese prison, leaving behind only a white hat. On the day before the October riot Jamyang was resting near the Jokhang, Lhasa's central temple. There he joined the crowds shouting "Free Tibet", took part in stoning the police post, where the demonstrating monks were imprisoned, and watched the shootings. He also saw the Chinese using their new electric prods on demonstrators. He dismisses the Chinese charge that most Tibetans are happy and that the riot was provoked by a few of the Dalai Lama's agents. "If parents are nice, children don't behave badly."

Shackled, kicked, interrogated

Jamyang, too, saw the police video camera focused on him and knew he should run for the border. Friends took him most of the way in trucks, but he was arrested and gaoled for five days, shackled, kicked, interrogated, and threatened. As he was being taken by police jeep to another larger town he jumped out, and after eluding patrols in the mountains, crossed into Nepal. He was amazed to be brought into the presence of the Dalai Lama. "In Tibet every high Chinese official walks on a carpet. His Holiness lives in a small house. Someday I hope to meet a Chinese official and talk with him face to face."

A more problematic source of information for the Dalai Lama is Jampa Gyaltsen Chapa, 39, eldest son of Chapa Kasag Wangdi, ex-vice mayor of Lhasa, ex-director of the Tibetan mint, deputy chairman of the Tibetan People's Consultative Congress, and head of what is generally known as the First Family of Tibetans serving the Chinese.

Chapa arrived in Macleod Ganj last December, and as a well-known Tibetan, who happens also to be the ninety-first incarnation of one of Tibet's most celebrated monks, was welcomed by the Dalai Lama. But signs have gone up in the village accusing him of being a Chinese agent, sent to spy on the government-in-exile. He knows this and hopes that by being seen to "serve the Tibetan people" his reputation will improve. He told me that some of his father's Chinese friends have admitted in confidence that since China can barely run itself there is little chance of it succeeding in Tibet. Whether Chapa is a spy or not, this seems a reasonable, indeed a modest, judgement. □

Jonathan Mirsky went to Dharamsala for the Observer.

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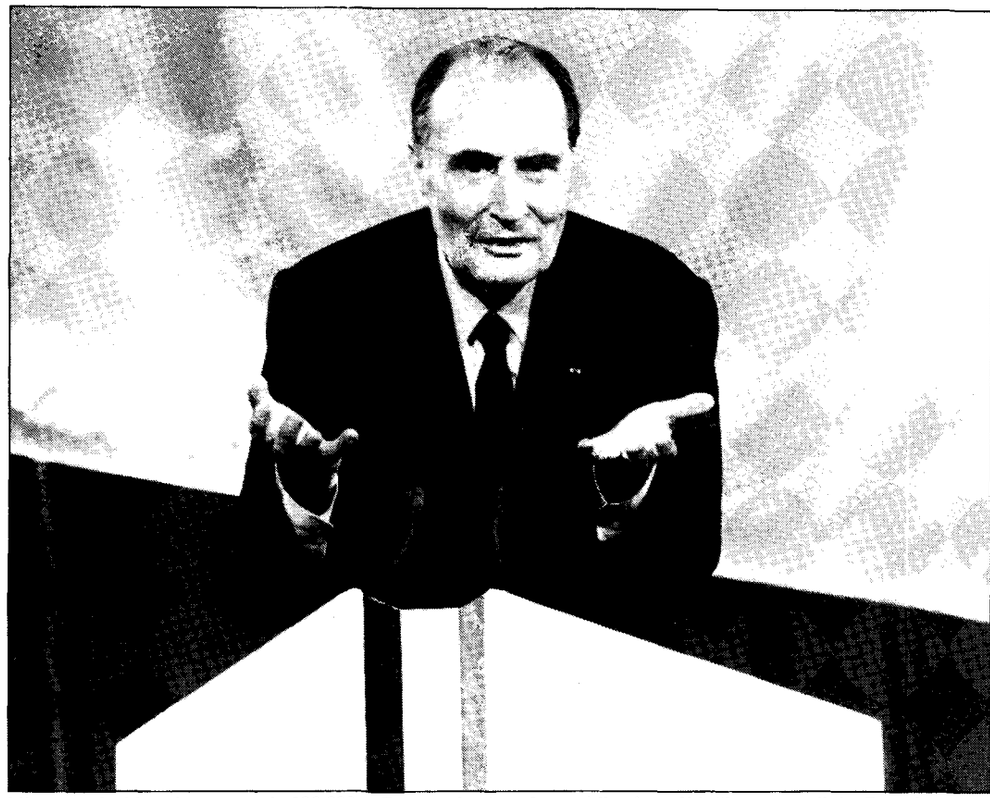
The good and the wicked hit the campaign trail

DAVID S. BELL *surveys the field in the French presidential elections, a month after Mitterrand finally threw his hat into the ring*



Gamma/Frank Spooner Pictures

Mitterrand addressing a crowd of 20,000 at Rennes the day after publication of his "Letter to all the French people" banished the word "socialist" from his vocabulary

PRESIDENT MITTERRAND'S entry into the French election campaign on 22 March had a glass-shattering effect. He replied to the question whether he would be a candidate with a simple "yes" and then went on to describe the horrors of the Gaullist state — "of clans, factions and banks" — in truly Transylvanian terms.

His opponents were left devastated by a true master of the political craft. Mitterrand captured the initiative and has held onto it since. On 7 April he again upstaged the right with the publication of his manifesto, silencing accusations that he was running on personality rather than issues. A long (60-page, 20,000-word) "Letter to all the French people," it rolled out in sonorous sentences and was unexceptional to the point of banality.

Despite the length, Mitterrand did not go into detail but made sure there was something for everyone (except the National Front): there will be no further nationalisation, although a hard core of holding companies set up under the Gaullists will be broken up; there is to be a wealth tax to fund a minimum income for the "New poor"; there will be a new body to guarantee the independence of broadcasting, as well as £1.5 billion for industrial research, training and modernisation; and he includes a call for a new "Marshall Plan" for the Third World. The unanimously adopted Socialist candidate has banished the word socialist from his vocabulary. In its place goes the language of consensus.

Mitterrand's campaign is not run by the Socialist Party but by an HQ in the rue Franco-Russe. Michel Rocard, as Mitterrand's official spokesman, has been prominent and has made a pitch for the centre vote. Indeed the Socialist Party as such has made so few interventions that last weekend Mitterrand called for more activity — more fly-posting, door knocking and encouragement to voters in the last few days of the campaign.

The non-partisan nature of this campaign is underscored by the TV advert for Mitterrand, which whips through French history, taking in images from the Revolution, the nineteenth century, the Popular Front, B. B., Jean-Claude Killy, all to end on "France unie". Mitterrand's attempts to wrap himself in red, white and blue proved too much for the Gaullists, who took him to court for breaking the electoral law forbidding use of the Tricolour flag.

The united France Mitterand claims to represent even has room for conservatives though they may not deserve it. He told an activists' meeting in Rennes: "We are not the good and they the wicked, even though they may think that they are the good and we the wicked".

In Sunday's contest he has only one rival, prime minister Jacques Chirac. Chirac's neo-Gaullist party is by far the best organised and has been gearing up for the campaign over the last two years — and it shows. This professionalism is where Chirac scores. He has run a tireless campaign, criss-crossing France with a travelling show. His one-gimmick-per-day cavalry charge has not been flawless however. The most gaffes came in Marseilles where Chirac said that he "understood" racists. But the momentum of his campaign has pushed him ahead of the other conservative candidate, Raymond Barre. With the timing of a consummate modern politician, Chirac's right hand Balladur grabbed the headlines with a call for the creation of a unified conservative party after the elections, on the day Barre was appealing to voters on TV. This upstaging had the added advantage of dividing Barre's UDF party and poisoning the atmosphere with fears of a take-over.

Chirac's carefully planned campaign leaves open the possibiliy of a "coup" in the last days of electioneering — the return of hostages, maybe, or a scandal uncovered. Afterwards, if, as seems certain, Chirac wins, he will have to get the toothpaste back into the tube to persuade the centrists to vote for him on the second ballot. Despite his efforts to appear laid-back, young and

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middle-of-the-road, he retains the image of an authoritarian. He has gone through several political transformations and now he has so many sides he is quite round.

Raymond Barre held a party but nobody came. His campaign is old-fashioned, dowdy and a shambles. He reacted to Chirac's vigorous campaign like Sir Geoffrey Howe on valium. Barre's lead has been frittered away and his position as the candidate above party usurped by Mitterrand. He has been forced to make electoral promises on the run — or in his case on the crawl.

Since 1982 Barre has insisted that his party would not run the country with a Socialist president. As his opinion poll rating slipped, his supporters pushed for a change of heart. Now he is suggesting that if Mitterrand won they could coexist. But it may be too late. He has has also failed to get across his austere message on the economy and his call — which had a double-breasted smug quality — for a return to the executive presidency is not a winner. Barre has been hard hit by a "dirty tricks" campaign (not Socialist, as Mrs Barre noted) suggesting that he is pro-Russian and anti-semitic. Squeezed between the two professionals, Barre looks like a drafts player who has wandered by mistake into a chess tournament.

There are also six minor candidates. Starting with the sects without love (as the *NS* called them), there is the surprise Trotskyist Pierre Boussel (aka Lambert) and Arlette Laguillier, who stood in 1974 and in 1981. The ecologists are fielding Antoine Waechter, whom they hope will build on the successes of Rene´ Dumont in 1874 and Brice Lalonde in 1981 (who polled one million votes).

"Raymond Barre held a party but nobody came. His campaign is a shambles. He reacted to Chirac's vigorous campaign like Sir Geoffrey Howe on valium. Barre looks like a drafts player who has wandered by mistake into a chess tournament"

Like the Flat Earth Society, the Communist Party is still there but irrelevant. Despite a well-organised campaign, the communists have been unable to disguise their disunion. The communist trade unions are split and the mainstream Reunion Party has puzzled many supporters by calling for a Mitterrand vote on the first ballot. Maybe it is just as well. Their candidate, Lajoinie, is seen as nothing more than a ventriloquist's dummy worked by party leader Georges Marchais. His rural background makes him look as if he would be happier mangling worzels somewhere. Furthermore, the party's stalinism was emphasised when journalists on its daily paper resigned because a photo featuring a "non-person" had been taken out.

The imposition of Lajoinie as candidate led to a breakaway by dissident communists under Juquin. His coalition of immigrants, Third Worlders, ecologists, Trotskyists, the PSU unified socialist party, and ex-communists is not a vote winner. This fragmentation seems to confirm the view that the "final struggle" will not be between capitalists and communists but between communists and ex-communists.

Although Juquin's themes of votes for immigrants and unilateral disarmament have little popular backing, his attacks on the National Front have been judged effective. His target Jean Marie Le Pen remains untroubled however. He looks set to surpass his showing in the European elections of 1984 when he got 11 per cent. This is despite the acusations from his estranged wife that he is a crude racialist, a multi-millionaire, and an uncultured oaf "who thinks that Schopenhauer is a German beer". Le Pen's Strewel Peter opinions have hit home and their popularity suggests that he has overcome the wasted vote argument (in fact few of Le Pen's voters think he could be president). Le Pen's supporters link immigration with unemployment and the "send-them-back" remedy is popular with his voters. The National Front vote, particularly in its distribution, is a marker for the local elections next year. More important, the votes will be up for grabs on the second ballot.

There is an old adage that Fifth Republic France is governed from the centre but not by the centre. But the National Front campaign may change all that. Chirac has tried to move onto Le Pen's ground and has opened up the immigration debate. The peculiarity of this election and of French politics in the European context is the size of the extreme right vote. There is more at stake than the collapse of M. Barre's election campaign. Chirac does not seem to take the view that it is better to lose an election than to lose your soul. □

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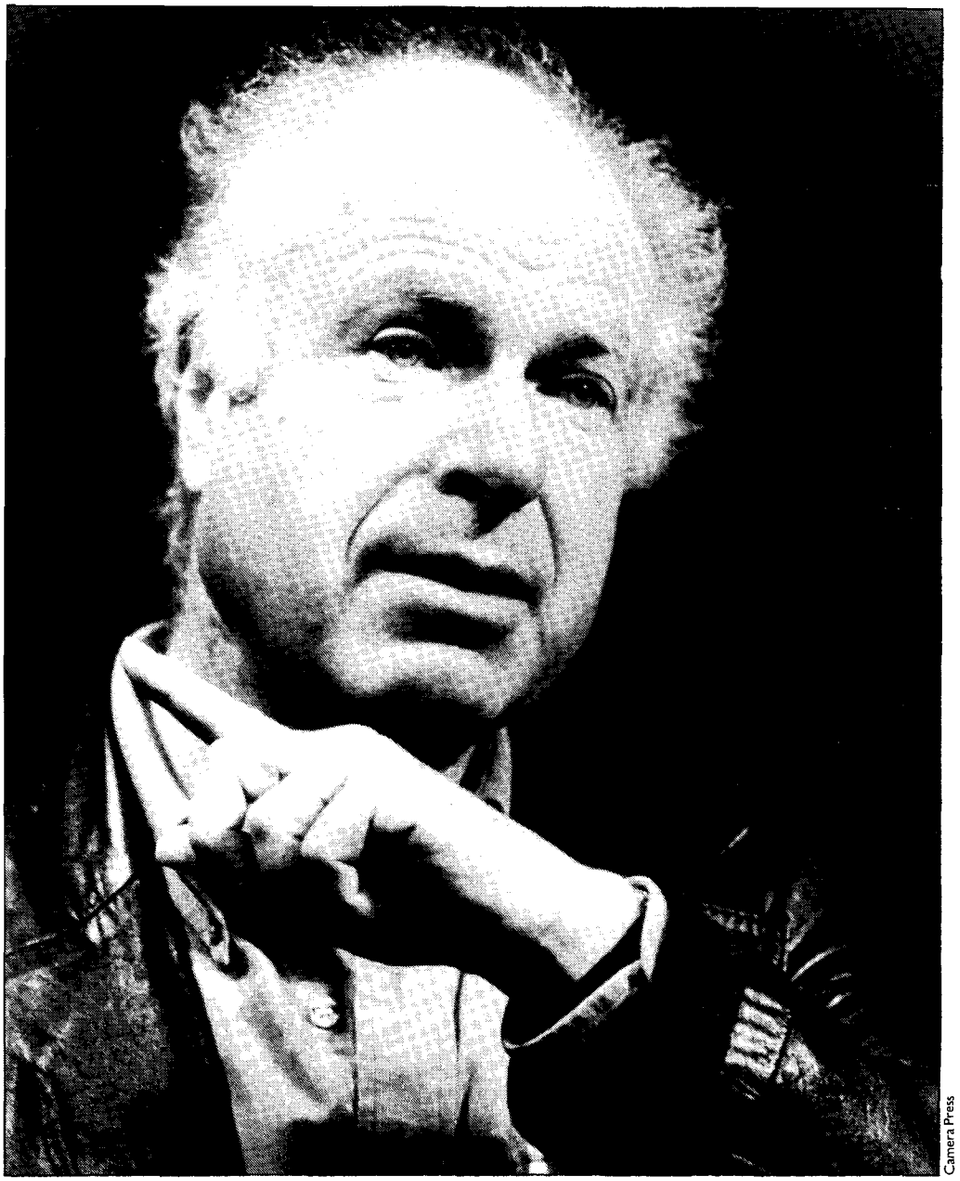
The reluctant hero comes home

In Glasgow for the British premiere of his Hindu epic "The Mahabharata",* PETER BROOK — *perhaps our most thoughtful and creative theatre director — talks to* BOYD TONKIN *about intellectuals, storytelling and drunks



Camera Press

Brook tells analytic critics where to go

PETER BROOK'S COMPANY once played parts of *The Mahabharata* inside a mental hospital in France. One day they performed to a roomful of psychiatrists; the next day, to patients.

"With the doctors," Brook remembers, "you could feel their brains whirring away, constructing theories and then silently comparing them with what they thought their neighbours' might be. The patients were quite the opposite. Each image struck home so directly that we had to be very careful. Any insensitivity and we could have set someone's treatment back for years."

Since its premiere at the Avignon Festival in July 1985, Brook's production of Jean-Claude Carrière's nine-hour trilogy, taken from the principal epic of Hinduism, has challenged a string of hard-boiled Western audiences to respond more like the patients than the doctors. Aiming to evoke an open-hearted wonder, the plays are theatrical icebergs. Their surface naivety hides years of toil and experiment.

Yet Brook and his cast still call for a leap of faith from a public often more adept at jumping to conclusions. To his continuing delight, it usually happens: "*The Mahabharata*, like the Beaujolais Nouveau, suddenly arrives, is here. All our efforts then become transparent."

Role of the audience

After English-language runs in Australia and America, it now casts spells on Glasgow from the former transport museum set south of the Gorbals among a large Asian (but, piquantly, Muslim) community. We spoke after the end of its first three-night cycle, but before the opening "marathon" when the assembled media ("an abnormal audience") would inspect the entire trilogy.

Brook praised the earliest Glaswegian houses. Theatre staff confirmed that this was more than a diplomatic gesture. "In Los Angeles, all the audience wanted to do was laugh, even at the slightest things," he recalls. "Here, in a place that knows about comedy, we got a real Glasgow response at the right moments. But I don't think that we've ever had an audience so keen to follow the story."

From Perth to Brooklyn, every stop on the production's tour has made its own *Mahabharata*. Brook speaks of its many-sidedness much as he used to do of Shakespeare: "Every audience takes from it what they bring to it, and what they bring to it are really their own interests and concerns."

In France, at the outset, a defensive intelligentsia managed to grasp his intentions: "The whole of the French press, which is very critical, sensed that this was not something to be lived through their intellectual baggage. By the time we got to New York, though, there was an extraordinary division.

"The press analysed the performance according to a whole set of theoretical criteria that didn't apply: the well-made play, and so on. People who had never been to India discussed it according to whether this was true to Hinduism. So it screened out of the audience those readers who were like the reviewers and, in their place, we had a completely open response. The people who would share those prejudices just didn't bother to come."

Time and again Brook has underlined that *The Mahabharata* sets out to suggest the Hindu culture that spawned it, not to collect its styles like some light-fingered tourist. Rendering a work "whose greatness isn't for us to claim", he does hope to emulate the epic's ability to touch every age and condition of its hearers. He quotes a classical Sanskrit definition of drama: "It must appeal to the man who wants to understand the universe, the man who wants to understand society, and to the

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drunken man who wants consolation."

Carrière's script builds its huge superstructure of gods and demons, dreams and delusions, quarrelling dynasties and globe-shaking wars on a story told by the bard Vyasa to a child who seeks to know the history of his race. This primordial "once upon a time" unfolds into a *matrushka*-like nest of narratives, very ancient and very contemporary.

"The basic *Mahabharata* is a marvellous kaleidoscope of many storytellers," says Brook. "It is actually a story told by someone who says 'I met someone who had a story which was told by someone to somebody else.' There are five levels of telling in all." Each turns on the education of the receiver (a young prince in the original). "By understanding his entire genetic material, he will be able to cope more truly with all the confusions, distractions and forces within him."

At once a sacred scripture and a comic-strip, *Mahabharata* asks its public to dump stock notions of genre and decorum in the cloakroom. Anyone who cares for Shakespeare should have no trouble in that respect. More contentious is Brook's deep distrust of the moralising cerebration that guts any story of its pot of message. "If one brings to it a concept of good and evil, one's lost," he insists. "Indian thought is about splendours and terrors, about magnificent people and monstrous people, but not about good and bad people."

This dualism goes hand-in-hand with an urge to take a scalpel to any aesthetic experience: "All through one's life, every Westerner has to come to the point of recognising that his analytic mind is his strongest tool and also his greatest barrier." Dissecting intellects, he adds, tend to like well-made plays with tight little packages of theme and ideas.

"This, in England, is the deeply-respected god, the real model. Other things are considered fantastic, fanciful or charming experiments in a nonsense region, but you must come down to the honest area where the mind and intellect are treated as the best in man.

***The Archers* P. Brook style**

"The kind of thought out of which all myth comes denies this totally. There's another, deeper, portion of the mind that's touched in a different way, through the coded sequences of images that we call stories. When that is reached, a whole area of understanding is awake which is often in total contradiction to the material in the everyday, well-formed, analytic mind.

"To me, this function is primitively fundamental to the theatre at all times. The very reason to go to the theatre is not to have that analytic mind re-encouraged and comforted; but to have the opportunity to put it quietly, for a certain duration, to rest."

If this makes Brook sound distinctly Jung at heart, he also stresses that the shedding of defences that theatre allows comes about in moments of paradox. Enlightenment dawns when equal but incompatible truths collide.

In *The Mahabharata*, for instance, the devious Krishna's taste for dirty tricks never undermines his divinity. "Suddenly the hardest working and most virtuous people come up against this very human, droll, compassionate god who looks at them with deep understanding and says, 'What is needed is the opposite, you have to tell a lie at this point, you have to cheat.'

> *If one brings to it a concept of good and evil, one's lost . . . Indian thought is about splendours and terrors, about magnificent people and monstrous people, but not about good and bad people*

"Is this a cynical view? Yes, we say, this is very modern, very cool. He would fit beautifully on Reagan's staff. This is the Colonel North of India. Yet one feels in one's guts that he represents something of such quality, such purity. You then say, 'Look, what does this all mean?' At that moment one's in an experience rather than a thought."

For Brook, this Keatsian "negative capability" lies at the root of all true drama. So he found the epic "essential theatrical experience" not just for its content but because the fluid and darting narratives matched the open forms that his troupe has sought since he began work in Paris 18 years ago. Like oral storytelling, his Centre's "carpet shows" are full of jump-cuts and elisions. They can squash time or expand it. They swerve from place to place, or insert tales within tales. Written by a screenwriter whose pedigree of scripts stretches from *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* to *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, the Brook-Carrière *Mahabharata* inevitably gets labelled "cinematic".

Brook takes the point, and plans to complete the circuit by filming the production in India. Then he presses the analogy one stage further. "The capacity of imagination, if you have no structure at all, is so great that the most natural form for the sort of improvisation we do comes from the same ground out of which cinematic technique arose. Flashing from this to that, dissolves and fades: they all reproduce a mental process. That's how imagination works, which is why this isn't a mandarin language. Ordinary people all over the world have gone into something as stylised as cinematic montage and been able to follow it."

In the second part of Carrière's trilogy, *Exile in the Forest*, the Kaurava clan conjures up a vision of the archer Arjuna. They watch his, and their rivals the Pandavas', adventures. Within a few pages of script, past, present and future close like a concertina. "When Jean-Claude had written this, quite easily because of all the experience he had with free theatre, he realised that this is what one calls Shakespearean time. That is neither cinematic nor theatrical, but the freedom of the imagination, which as long as it's held by the story really doesn't put those sort of questions."

State of the art

Eager postmodernists could find in this 2,500-year-old text a compendium of state-of-the-art narrative features. Not only does the stage version retain this quicksilver way with time, space and character. It foregrounds an obliquity or finesse in its attitudes that some could take for non-committal blankness. The prospect of apocalyptic war haunts the action from the start. Forms and designs quote from styles that span the world and the history of its theatres. And it ceaselessly reflects on its own status as spectacle and story.

At the end of the last part, Brook says, the scene that audiences have taken as a representation of paradise is, in fact, "the last illusion". It makes a bridge between the world of the play and everyday perception. "The reality is that the actors, musicians and audiences gently let go of the horrors. We've been in an imaginary world full of real horror and terror. It is a world of illusion, the world of theatre. Instead of cutting out of it brutally, we might as well spend a quarter of an hour listening to music and coming out quietly. It isn't really meant to be an image of paradise."

Brooks' interpreters have become a cross he wearily bears. Hailed as the climax of his "Pari-

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sian" phase, the trilogy is now greeted as a kind of grand, Prospero-like signing-off. "I'm very realistic. I know that it's not possible to work in the theatre without public discussion," he comments. "At the same time, I read these things and I don't recognise them as having any basis in life as I know it."

His old antagonist, the "Western analytic mind", expects logical sequences in directors' careers as well as in the plays they stage. "One doesn't live in that sort of way. Doing *Mahabharata* wasn't a great intellectual decision." Evolution, yes; but no stately progress towards a pre-arranged goal: "In its nature, it took up a lot of time. For it to be considered a milestone, though, is a lot of shit."

Brook now intends to change gear into a chamber work with a handful of actors. "I just try to be clear with myself that I'm in no way influenced by all this talk; that having made a symphony I must therefore go on to make a choral symphony to follow it."

> *"In its nature, "The Mahabharata" took up a lot of time. For it to be considered a milestone, though, is a lot of shit"*

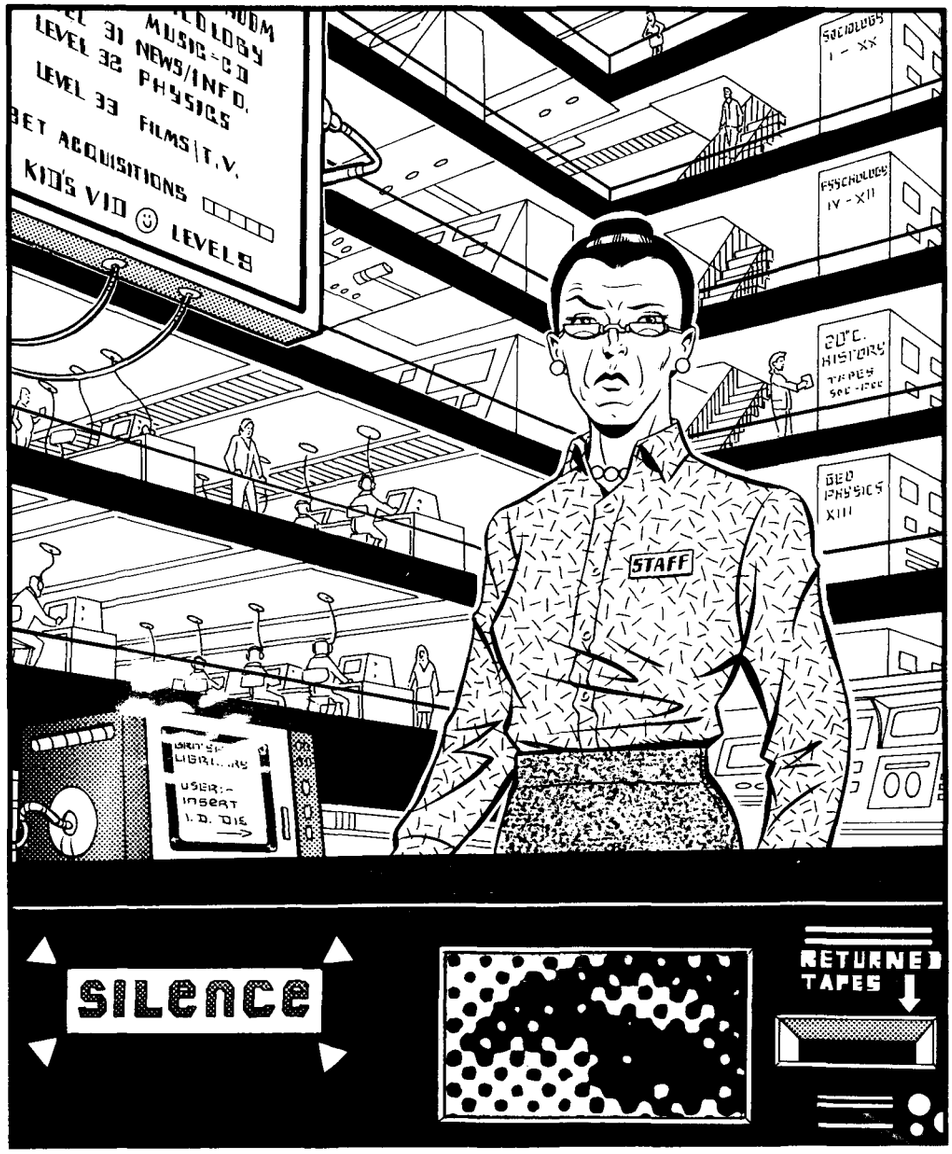
Swallow the hype, and inflation sets in: "I've seen how really destructive it is with so many friends, film directors more than anybody. You get to the point where your status depends on the budget for your next film being higher than the one before."

Puffed or punctured by critics for over 40 years, Brook denies that he ever meant to found a cult or lead a crusade. He resents "this irritating image that I've come with a message or a mission. I don't think one's in the theatre to do that. I do think that there's a very simple, very honest choice, which is between preferring a rich and dense experience in the theatre or a shallow one, though shallow experiences can be great fun."

The Mahabharata concludes with a glimpse of feasting. Its director ends with a vision of drama more carnal than mystical: "In the theatre you're no better, no worse and no different to somebody who's running a restaurant." Though the tastes fade and the aura disperses, sometimes the shared intensity of the event can survive. "To the actors I say, 'If there are as many people in the audience as we are, who take something away which lasts, that's the biggest reward one can hope for.'"

He speaks with the wary modesty of a reluctant legend tired of shouldering the weight of false expectations. Fans and foes have both thrust corny fantasies of omnipotence onto him. But *The Mahabharata* bears witness to the craft of a head chef, not a high priest. "If you really feel that your work has had that extra vitamin, that someone has felt you've been useful; it's very rare, but that's the ultimate reward. As far back as when we did *US* people used to ask me, 'Do you think you're going to stop the Vietnam War?' People say that Beaumarchais helped start the French Revolution with the *Marriage of Figaro*. I don't believe it for a moment."

Books



Freedom of information

The public library service is surrounded by threats: from the shadowy talons of Clause 29, from the whistling blades of funding cuts. Now the government's Green Paper, as **HELEN BIRCH** *explains, is endangering it yet further*

OF ALL POTENTIAL library users, according to a recent MORI poll, one third borrowed a library book ten times in the past year. Well, that's very nice to hear, but the only *growth* area, in a public library service beleaguered by cuts and closures, is the demand for videos, records and computer facilities.

Funding all these services still costs a modest £8 per head and it seems churlish to complain about paying an extra 30p to reserve a book, as you do in Islington, or complain about paying £1 to borrow a video for a week when your local rental shop would hit you for up to £2 for just one night. It could, after all, be so much worse — and will if Richard Luce, the Minister for Arts and Libraries, has his way.

The Government Green Paper on financing the public library service is, of course, merely a consultative document; it does not, at this stage, intend to mandate libraries to introduce charges for anything. A rather abstruse and confusing set of proposals — which George Cunningham, Chief Executive of the Libraries Association, calls "an

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atrocity to the English language' — it does state clearly the government's commitment to a "Free Basic Library Service". What it *will* do, in other words, is protect your rights as an individual (but not if you're part of an institution or business) to borrow any print material, to use a mobile library, a reference book or obtain general assistance from library staff. But it is also designed to *encourage* (and the emphasis throughout is on discretionary measures) a more entrepreneurial approach to raising income.

Suggestions include charging for borrowing non-print material or material in excess of the usual allowance, for inter-library loans or obtaining specialist information or consultation. This isn't entirely unreasonable. If, for example, a chemical company wants to obtain information from specialist journals, or reports for the purpose of research and, ultimately, profit, it may seem fair that it should pay for it. Besides, there's no question of coercion; any local authority could provide all its services free if it could still fulfil the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act "to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service".

Other proposals, however, are more obviously controversial. These include competitive tendering (though it's not clear for what); the contracting out of ancillary services like branch libraries or services to old people's homes; joint ventures with the private sector and specialist research for businesses. And, controversial or not, many of these initiatives have already been taken up: libraries in old industrial towns like Sheffield and Leeds have long been co-operating with local companies to provide indexes for obscure journals and reports.

Like most public policy proposals generated by the Thatcher government, the Green Paper has a background that is by no means straightforward. By the late 1960s, the statutory powers given to public libraries by the 1964 Act, together with the competition of mass market paperbacks, had forced the remaining private lending libraries to shut up shop. Since then, the public libraries have had to respond to the needs of the technological age in the face of ever diminishing funds; most central libraries now offer on-line computer facilities, videos for training and educational use as well as pleasure, music, microfiche and pictures. Under the existing legislation they are allowed to charge for many of these services — and most do, though only nominally. But times are changing and, although the printed word is still the backbone of the library service, the government proposals threaten to hit the facilities which are most likely to be in demand in the future. "The Paper makes an old-fashioned distinction between printed material and other forms of information," says George Cunningham. "It's only a matter of time before reference works like *Who's Who?* will be available on-line. Why should it be the case that things that have come into existence since Carnegie's time should be charged for?" Or, as Frank Reagan, County Librarian for Cleveland, puts it: "Libraries are about communication, not books, and technology is going to play a more important role as time goes on. The only thing that's seen as basic in the Green Paper is the right to go to your local library and choose from a limited number of books."

Which brings us to inter-library loans. At present, most libraries only charge a reservation fee. But the Green Paper stresses that libraries should make these services self-financing and charge the full economic cost. All the people I spoke to pointed out that an effective inter-library loan system is dependent upon co-operation between both different types of library — public and academic — and between different local authorities. The Green Paper will, for the first time, permit one library or authority to charge another the full cost (estimated at between £2.50-£4) of lending a book. The implications of this, as one Chief Librarian told me, are that "if those local authorities which are more in line with this government's policies begin to charge, others will have to follow suit to recover their costs; there will inevitably be a knock-on effect which defeats the object of making these charges discretionary in the first place." Alternatively, if a library decides instead to make the borrower pay, "it will mean that people who have the means to pay will get the better service". George Cunningham agrees: "Examples from the rest of the world show that, if you introduce charges, you cut usage. Charging will have a disincentive effect on attempts to encourage literacy and access to information." And people living in rural areas with small branch libraries which rely on inter-library loans, or in the poorer inner city boroughs, will undoubtedly suffer.

The same applies to Luce's suggestion that libraries consider introducing a premium subscription service to provide new popular fiction and biography "on demand". There are echoes here of the old lending libraries which catered entirely for the popular end of the reading market. But, unlike them, a public library has a duty to provide access to the entire range of information required by the local community, and the cost of making a subscription service self-financing may well make inroads into other, less commercially viable aspects of the service. "You'd need to get inordinate numbers of copies of Jeffrey Archer to meet demand," George Cunningham explains "and what would you do with them afterwards? Although the library system has to respond to public demand, it shouldn't have to cater for the lowest common denominator at the expense of a comprehensive service."

Have the public libraries been hoist by their own petard, by introducing charges in the first place? The fact is that many of them have not had much choice. The outlook, if the Green Paper ever reaches the statute books, is grimmer still. At present, the libraries are funded through the Rate Support Grant (though it's unclear how this will change once the Poll Tax is introduced) and Government figures show that the libraries in England currently raise £21 million in revenue per year. The initial aim is to more than double that figure. But there are no guarantees that, even if the libraries succeed in doing so, such income will then be ploughed back into the service. It is even possible, as George Cunningham points out, "that the sums raised could be knocked off existing grants".

"You have to see this paper in the wider context of the erosion of public services," another Chief Librarian pointed out. "It could be the first step to making charges mandatory, and is anyway designed to provide a two-tier service. In many ways it's a direct parallel to what's happening in the NHS." □

Waffling while women starve

Sheila Rowbotham

Trade Unions and the New Industrialisation of the Third World
ed. ROGER SOUTHALL *Zed* £29.95 & £9.95

TWENTY PAIRS of Gloria Vanderbilt jeans were fetching $800 on the US market in the early 1980s. For this daily output, Sri Lankan women workers in an Export Processing Zone received less than a dollar a day.

Meanwhile, in many of the advanced capitalist countries, unemployment has thrown the trades unions onto the defensive, with a widespread curtailment of workers' rights.

Roger Southall captures the tragic scope of this "world-historical" drama and asks whether third-world trades unions can shift the terms of the global transformation and whether a basis for working-class internationalism is emerging. He shepherds the readers of his collection — based on a conference in Ottawa on trades unions and the changing international division of labour — through diverse analyses, also through some illuminating historical accounts of labour struggles in Argentina, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Iran. The specific studies correct a tendency for the theory of new divisions of labour to assume a deterministic emphasis, as it follows economic tracks of capital without regard to social resistance or political structures.

James Petras and Dennis Engbarth argue that it is a dead end for trades unions simply to defend jobs in declining industries. Amidst recession and restructuring they need to switch towards conversion plans and alternative development strategies — which would make as much sense in the North as the South.

Rhoda Howard's contribution, however, on the disregard of human rights in some African state socialisms, shows that the integration of trades unions involves loss of autonomy. This could suggest a danger in moving from being adversaries to planners.

Peter Waterman's contribution indefatigably assembles examples of new models of international forms of communication. It is valuable to recognise the potential of these webs, though it must also be conceded that they are fragile with many broken strands.

Southall says that the aim of the collection is not to revert to comfortable certainties, in which trades unionism is regarded as the *only* form of resistance and organisation. Instead, the intention is to harness the insights from new approaches to ask wider questions about trades unions' potential. This is all very well and good, but it would not appear that all the contributors had been exactly immersed in these "broader processes" — which, after a series of headings, finally include women. Petras and Ramsey, for example, complain of the problem that women present to trades unions in export zones, because they are so busy with family responsibilities they cannot participate in struggle. Women activists would answer that the male dominated unions also present certain problems

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for women.

Besides, domestic work is not sufficient explanation of the particular problems of unionising in export zones. In other kinds of circumstances there *have* been traditions of trades union organisation among women: for example, in the Indian textiles and mining industry. Perhaps Rhoda Howard's insistence on the importance of democratic rights is relevant here.

The reluctance of women to organise is also partly because alternative forms of employment are even worse than those in the export zones. So, while democratic rights and freedoms are important, they are not the only requirements: the material choices available affect one's perception of freedom.

Strangely, the discussion of trades unions and the new industrialisation of the third world does not take on as a key question their capacity to combine with workers in the informal sector — where, especially among women, creative forms of organising are being established.

Both in the South and the North the capacity to organise, despite casualisation, will affect the chances of challenging the restructuring by capital at the expense of the people who are the most hard-pressed and overburdened with toil without just recompense.

My other grouse is that a book which asks questions which are vital for the working class, and its allies, is lazily compiled within an academic conference idiom. It is replete with initials. There are NIDLS and CIDLS and one contributor begins with the announcement: "For some years Professor RW Cox and myself have been working on a typology of modes, or forms, of social relations of production . . ." Sometimes the lamp of global enquiry narrows to a tiny spotlight on the concerned academic's desk.

Would there not be a case for considering that access to the resources of time and geographical mobility — at present used to gather internationally and produce conference papers — is part of a social relation weighted in favour of privilege? Challenge to the international division of labour involves shifting these resources. Widening the scope of experience of the new industrialisation could open up new forms of communication and ideas about how combinations of struggle could strengthen resistance. □

Battle of the souls

Grace Ingoldby

The Sorcerer's Apprentice
CHARLES JOHNSON *Serpent's Tale* £5.95

"A NEGRO PROFESSOR is . . . a kind of two-reeled comedy . . . he looks back to the bleak world of black Chicago where his spirit, if you will, fought to free itself . . . from a life that led predictably to either drugs, a post office job, Marion Prison, Sunset Cemetery (all black) or the ooga-booga of Christianity. And what of college? There like a thief come to table, he hungrily grabs crumbs of thought from their genuine context . . . feeling his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two warring ideals in one dark body."

This quote from Charles Johnson's new collection of stories states most plainly the tension that runs throughout them: the clash of cultures, the "twoness", the legacy of slavery, the duality that shackles and brands, the recognition that those emerging from darkness are both confused and convalescent, that recovery takes generations of blinking and adjusting to the light. In its raw state there is Mingo, "a dark boy, a wild-marshy-looking boy. His breastbone was broad as a barrel, he had thick hands that fell away from his wrists like weights".

Moses, a lonely old farmer, buys Mingo as much for a friend as a field hand and decides to school the boy himself. Warned that playing God leads to "a peck of trouble" ("Slaves are tools with life in them, Moses, and tools are lifeless slaves") Moses nonetheless teaches Mingo everything he knows, the boy's education involving "the evaporation of one coherent, consistent, complete universe and the embracing of another one, alien, contradictory, strange". Well-intentioned Moses is not "the most reliable lens for looking at things" and Mingo's schooling has disastrous, deadly results.

In "Exchange Value" two black brothers break into the flat of a "hincty half-bald West Indian woman" figuring that old Miss Bailey "had some grandtheft dough stashed inside . . . cause she never spent a nickel on herself not even for food and only left her place at night". The hunch pays off; the living-room webbed in dust "be filled to the max with dollars of all denominations . . . so like picture book scenes of plentifulness you could seal yourself off in here and settle forever". Miss Bailey has lived like a pauper despite being left a fortune; the legacy was "her one shot in a lifetime to be rich but being country she had backward ways and blew it". She suffered "that special Negro fear of using up what little we get in this life believing in her belly that there just ain't no more coming tomorrow from grace, or the Lord or from her own labor . . . she be spellbound, possessed by the promise of life, panicky about depletion . . . cause every purchase you know, has to be a poor buy, a loss of life."

Will the brothers — one of whom buys *Esquire*, talks proper, graduated fifth in High School, reads *Black Scholar* on the bus, talks about entropy — scent the same old Negro fear, fall into the same trap?

These stories, full of magic and the unexpected, are underpinned by sadness. The author has been compared to Zora Neale Hurston and his writing — Mama "as big as a Frigidaire", a boy "bout as useful on a hustle as a head cold", education "as serious as a heart attack" — has a similar verve and freshness. But Johnson, an English Professor at Washington University, is no mean philosopher. While quite as exhilarating as Hurston, his sophistication, the range of his stories, the breadth of his understanding, and his experience, at many levels, of the clash of black and white give his work an added, teasing weight. Were comparisons in order — should anyone need to choose between such fine writers — then Johnson has the edge. □

The whole world swung along

Charles Fox

Duke Ellington
JAMES LINCOLN COLLIER *Michael Joseph* £15.95
Sidney Bechet: The Wizard of Jazz
JOHN CHILTON *Macmillan* £14.95
Talking Jazz
MAX JONES *Macmillan* £14.95

"DO I MAKE my disasters clear?" wrote Nicholas Moore, a poet out of fashion nowadays but once a denizen of every wartime little magazine.

What was going on in France and the Low Countries during 1940 needed no clarifying. Yet beleaguered British jazz fans experienced a trauma of their own, a very specialised kind of betrayal. "Cootie Leaves the Duke" ran a front-page headline in the *Melody Maker*: the most famous of Duke Ellington's trumpet players, an incisive wielder of the plunger mute, had handed in his notice and gone to Benny Goodman. Interestingly enough, in his book **Duke Ellington**, James Lincoln Collier regards that event as the first portent of what he sees as the gradual decline of the greatest of all jazz orchestras.

On the other hand 1940 found Sidney Bechet, two years older than Ellington, starting a comeback in New York that was to conclude with his becoming one of France's most honoured citizens, with squares and streets named after him. Bechet had roamed Europe in the 1920s, when the other men — notably his near-contemporary Louis Armstrong — were making their names back in America. That, coupled with popular taste shifting towards big bands, was why he was still a curiously neglected figure when war broke out.

He had, as it happens, already fitted in two separate jobs with the Ellington orchestra. The second was a matter of coaching Johnny Hodges, the saxophonist who most visibly showed Bechet's influence. The other occurred earlier, in 1924, when, at the same time as Armstrong was injecting pliancy and drive into Fletcher Henderson's orchestra, Bechet brought the same New Orleans virtues to the rather stiff-sounding band, the Washingtonians, which Ellington was leading at the Kentucky Club, just off Times Square.

James Lincoln Collier stresses the disparity between the middle-class, graciously mannered Ellington, always fond — like his father — of the flowery compliment, and some of the more down-to-earth characters he introduced into his band. Even in its heyday that band remained notoriously undisciplined, often going on-stage with several musicians absent.

Ellington, Collier suggests, felt a compulsion to use soloists whose "naturalness of behaviour" was reflected in their styles of playing. The result was a composing method which revolved around the contrast of sounds rather than any sort of development, ideal for what has been called the three-minute form (that was how long it took to play one side of a ten-inch 78 record). A consequence of this is that Collier dismisses — too peremptorily, perhaps — most of the latterday suites and all the Sacred Concerts.

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Ellington once described himself as a man of the theatre. Sidney Bechet was similarly concerned with dramatic impact, both musically and in such gestures as wearing a ring that he knew would flash when the spotlight fell upon it. Even in sedate old age he still carried a switchblade in his pocket; earlier he had resorted to heavier defences ("You could be surer if you had a gun on you," Bechet said of the days he spent in Paris after World War One). The vibrato he used when playing soprano saxophone was integral to his style, comparable to that of the operatic tenors he admired. And, while Ellington could certainly be called a ladies' man, he never equalled Bechet's feat of recording, at the same session, in May 1953, separate compositions celebrating his wife ("Elisabeth") and his mistress ("Jacqueline").

The larger-than-life qualities to be found in both the man and his music — nobody has brought a more passionate intensity to blues playing — are dealt with splendidly in John Chilton's **Sidney Bechet: The Wizard of Jazz**, meticulous as both a biography and a critical examination, and undoubtedly a classic of jazz scholarship.

It includes, of course, the first substantial piece of jazz criticism, Ernest Ansermet's remarkable prophecy, written after hearing Bechet in London in 1919: "What a moving thing it is to meet this very black, fat boy with white teeth and that narrow forehead . . . who can say nothing of his art save that he follows 'his own way'. And then one thinks that his 'own way' is perhaps the highway the whole world will swing along tomorrow."

(Chilton, very properly, also mentions the disappointment — "The days of jazz are over" — that Ansermet expressed 30 years later.)

There is, oddly enough, no interview with Bechet in **Talking Jazz**, while Max Jones is quoted by James Lincoln Collier as saying of Duke Ellington: "He was a most mysterious man . . . I never understood him." But otherwise this book is a fine selection from the hundreds of interviews Jones has carried out — mostly for the *Melody Maker* — since the end of World War Two. Nobody else has so enthusiastically combined affection with expertise.

The brief pieces are sometimes too brief, but the lengthy encounters — notably with Jimmy MacPartland, Billie Holiday and Mary Lou Williams ("I remember seeing Lovie Austin cross-legged at the piano, cigarette in mouth, writing music with her right hand while accompanying the show with her swinging left. I said, 'Mary! You'll do that someday'") — are major contributions to jazz history.

If Bechet gets overlooked, plenty of other New Orleans men turn up. The trumpeter Lee Collins, for instance, recollecting why another trumpeter, Freddy Keppard, always sounded so disappointing on records: "He would sit and play as little as he could, afraid his ideas would be stolen." Or yet another trumpeter — white this time — Wingy Manone, suspicious of the British and even more jaundiced about his hometown: "The best two things in New Orleans are a good meal and a train leaving."

His sentiment seems to have been reciprocated. When Wingy did decide that it was time to pay a visit, his father wrote back at once: "Just send the money you would spend on transportation. We got your picture." □

Leave the washing-up

Martin Chalmers

The Utopian Function of Art and Literature
ERNST BLOCH trans. JACK ZIPES and FRANK MECKLENBURG *MIT* £22.50

THERE ARE a number of ways of approaching the work of Ernst Bloch, the German-Jewish philosopher who died in 1975. Perhaps it is best not to begin with the contradictory conceptions of "hope" and "utopia" with which Bloch, as author of the encyclopedic *Principle of Hope*, is most immediately associated. A better starting-point is the related critique of progress which underlies all his writing.

Bloch took the concept of unequal development seriously, and recognised that it not only led to economic inequalities, but produced people living in different times even if their calendars showed the same date. The traditions and hopes of the apparently backward groups could not merely be dismissed as reactionary ideology. Consequently, in the 1930s Bloch understood more clearly than most the reasons for the failure and collapse of Communism in Germany. To a peasantry and lower middle class already suffering from modernisation and rationalisation, the Communists promised only a more efficient rationalisation. "Non-synchronous contradictions" were left to the Nazis to exploit. Throughout his life Bloch was to argue against the left's heartless (and debilitating) modernism and the abandonment of terms like "homeland", "nation" — even "Germanness" — to the right.

The key to Bloch's critique of progress is to be found in German Expressionism. The essays collected here, the earliest dating from 1918, the latest ones from the 1960s, show very powerfully how its influence endured. Long after Expressionism as a movement had disappeared in the early '20s, Bloch, even more than Benjamin, was an embodiment of the expressionist-utopian-anarchist current which entered German marxism after 1918.

Expressionism was not a modernist movement in an uncomplicated way. Or, at least, it was an anti-capitalist modernism which did not inevitably point in the direction summed up by "modern" architecture. The shapes and shadows of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* do not correspond to that; neither, more importantly, do the expressionist architectural schemes and work of Poelzig or Taut. Bloch himself draws attention to the disjuncture several times in the collection, for example in the contrast between the exuberance of a modern Chagall painting and the equally modern, but unadorned and dull, theatre foyer in which it is hung. He also notes that the basic beginnings of the abstract art of Marc and Kandinsky "were still rustic and exotic, not urban-industrial."

Modern architecture is frequently criticised in these essays. In the earliest one, from 1918, Bloch writes: "The machine knew how to produce everything so lifeless and inhuman in detail, just the way our new housing districts usually are. Its actual goal is the bathroom and the toilet that are the most unquestionable and the most original accomplishments of this era . . . now washing-up reigns." He was not at all sympathetic to the architectural kitsch (as he saw it) of Wilhelmine and Late Victorian styles, but he regarded the absence of ornament in modern buildings as merely a failure to think of something else.

Bloch does not present an aesthetics in a conventional sense. Rather, he theorises in an aesthetic mode, drawing out those elements over a range of forms and genres which resist their reduction to seamless, unfragmented, uncontradictory objects.

His achievement is as much literary as theoretical, and if his writing is at times difficult it is also exhilarating and often witty. Bloch's whole work, in fact, tends to dissolve distinctions between literature and philosophy. He treats high and low forms with equal commitment, discussing the "Oedipal hero" of the detective story ("there must be something to this case", he remarks) as easily as the force of melodrama in a play by Schiller. It is fairy tales, a borderline form, which often seem to constitute a kind of compendium basic text for him. Stories in which the cunning and courage of the weak win through against all the odds.

In the Grimms' tale of the "Town Musicians of Bremen", the donkey, the dog, the cat and the cock run away to escape the cruel fate being prepared for them by their masters, because "there is always something better than death". Bloch's writing, his obstinacy, erudition and story-telling bear that message too. □

Gruesome deaths in awesome scenery

Nick Caistor

Men of Maize
MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS trans. GERALD MARTIN *Verso* £12.95
Who Killed Palomino Molero?
MARIO VARGAS LLOSA trans. ALFRED MACADAM *Faber* £9.95

THERE'S NOW A FORMULA for writing Latin American "magical realism". The novel (preferably written in exile) should be set in a jungle or similar place, with untranslatable flora and fauna. A lack of outside references will make it impossible to know exactly where and when the action is taking place, thus elevating everything to the level of myth. The characters will all be more or less noble savages with impossible names, all related to one another and with a strong sense of destiny. The narration will be done by men drunk or on horseback, while the women will be whores, convent girls, mothers or any combination of the three. Many of the characters will meet gruesome deaths in awesome scenery.

The Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias is the grandfather of "magical realism". In the 1930s, together with Alejo Carpentier and Jorge Luis Borges, he helped shift the centre of Spanish language narrative decisively from metropolitan Spain to Latin America. With *El Señor Presidente* (1933) he created another genre, the "dictator"

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novel, also a must for any aspiring Latin American novelist.

Men of Maize, written in exile in 1949, is an attempt sympathetically to recreate the lost Indian heritage not only of Guatemala but of the whole continent. According to the ancient Mayan legend of the *Popol-Vuh*, the gods created the first men from ears of maize. Ever since, maize and its cultivation has had far more a religious than an economic significance: "we are made of maize, and we can't make a business out of what we're made of, out of what our flesh is", as one of the characters of the novel puts it. The book revolves around the struggle to preserve that holy meaning of the earth and man's attachment to it.

Even Spanish readers, as Gerald Martin notes in his introduction, have greeted *Men of Maize* with "admiration and bemusement in equal portions". In the English-speaking world, it is likely to be the latter which prevails, as the chapters of the book tell parallel stories and the last half is given over to the adventures of a postman who is turned into his animal counterpart, a coyote, by a faithless woman. The novel does reward patience and effort, however, with a persuasive glimpse of how another civilisation, all but extinguished now, might perceive the world. Gerald Martin's translation superbly conveys the exuberant strangeness of this universe — even if his introduction does the book a disservice by weighing it down under every academic concern from Darwin to deconstruction.

Mario Vargas Llosa from Peru is the next generation on from Miguel Angel Asturias. He contributed an admiring prologue to an edition of *Men of Maize* and has himself, particularly in early works such as *The Green House*, dabbled in magical realism of the Asturias/Faulkner/ventilator hybrid variety.

However, Latin American writers themselves have been among the first to be bored or dismayed at the idea of always having to write of double-headed children and plagues of butterflies. Many of the younger authors are more interested in Chandler than Faulkner, in dialogue, in city or town life and in social comment via irony and understatement. In **Who Killed Palomino Montero?** Vargas Llosa seems to be taking on this new generation and declaring, "Look, I can do it too." The novel in fact begins with one of the gruesome deaths mentioned in my blueprint but, from then on, concentrates on a realistic if ironic treatment of Lieutenant Silva and Sergeant Lituma's attempts to unravel the mystery of Palomino's murder. This killing of a young recruit harks back to the plot of Vargas Llosa's first novel in the early 1960s, *The City and the Dogs* — but, whereas then he was interested in denouncing the military as an institution which of necessity sought out a victim, he is now far more interested in individual psychology, and far less severe a judge.

A natural storyteller, Vargas Llosa has written a book full of incidental delights and sly humour. If ultimately it disappoints, because of its lack of ambition, this is probably because Vargas Llosa's own ambitions are now political rather than literary. He has become a likely candidate for the presidential elections in Peru in 1990, standing on a platform inspired by his admiration for Mrs Thatcher's free-market policies, and recently suggested that his newfound political vocation may force him to give up writing anything but speeches. A sad end for any magical realist. □

The scorpion kills herself

Diana Eden

What Fresh Hell Is This?
MARION MEADE *Heinemann* £12.95

HAROLD ROSS, creator and editor of the *New Yorker*, had occasion to chide Dorothy Parker for not coming into the office to write a promised piece. "I *did* come into the office," retorted Parker, "but somebody was using the pencil."

Dorothy Parker was possessed of a searing wit, a formidable talent for poetry and prose and a not inconsiderable capacity to be tiresome. Larry Adler once described her as the saddest person he'd ever met and certainly *What Fresh Hell Is This?*, Marion Meade's meticulous inventory of Parker's ups and downs and downs and downs, does little to contradict his view.

Parker's personal losses were, of course, her readers' gain — for wit, more often than not, is tragedy cunningly harnessed. Her *posthumous* tragedy, however, is twofold. First, it is her quippery that is remembered: her articles and reviews, her superbly sparse short stories (no tree was ever felled to print an extraneous Parker phrase) remain, alas, a minority delight. Second, Meade's excellent book contributes, in no small way, to the danger that the Parker legend (like that of De Beauvoir or Marilyn Monroe) will become more famous than her work.

A biography is a notoriously unreliable witness, particularly if, as in this case, the subject leaves no private papers of any kind. Marion Meade is to be congratulated upon a detailed and balanced reconstruction of a life based on interviews, insight and research, including material released by that doughty literary-appreciation circle — the FBI.

As Meade reveals — and skilfully addresses — Dorothy Parker neé Rothschild (but not *them* Rothschilds) invented herself continuously, "rewriting" her childhood, reassessing her work, diminishing her triumphs, verbally disembowelling present and former friends. During her own and the century's twenties, fate and determination seated her at the "round table" of the Algonquin Hotel, the then thinking person's Groucho Club. She wrote for *Vanity Fair* and the *New Yorker*, chose the wrong men and drank. She published acclaimed volumes of verse and fiction, chose the wrong men and drank. She embraced radicalism (marching in the lost cause of the condemned anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti) and visited Spain, chose the wrong men and drank. She went to Hollywood and wrote — mostly indifferent - scripts, chose the wrong men and perhaps you sense a pattern?

Meade chronicles this chaos with commonsensical compassion. From her deeply-plumbed Quinky sea there emerges a rounded, plausible, pitiably unhappy human being. Professionally, Parker was an undisciplined, gifted, suicidal lush — endlessly diverted by drinks and jinks and finks. Privately, she simply could not hold back a wisecrack. Relinquishing all control over her sensitivity sphincter she, and many others, suffered the results of her venomous, verbal incontinence. Thrice married (twice to her good-natured, possibly bisexual, definitely alcoholic, some-time co-writer), the self-styled "little jewish girl trying to be cute" died alone, aged 73, in a Manhattan Hotel room.

Had I a quibble — and God knows I usually have — it is that Meade omits from her apposite choice of quotes four lines which I fancy hold a master key to our contrary heroine:

> If I should labor through daylight and dark,
> Consecrate, valorous, serious, true,
> Then on the world I may blazon my mark,
> And what if I don't, and what if I do?

Cavils apart, Marion Meade pays constant and pertinent homage to Parker's pen. Should she, along the way, seduce the reader into devouring Parker's work (and I suspect she might) she will have performed a sterling and long overdue service.

For, on paper, Dorothy Parker is a peerless, wise and witty friend. To read her and, courtesy of Meade, to read about her, is sublime. But to have known her? *What* fresh hell. . . . □

Trees

Li Ho trans. **Graeme Wilson**

Let no more trees be planted in this garden:
Year in, year out, dark grief is all they grow.
I lie alone on a bed pale-washed with moonlight,
And the trees look darker than a year ago.

When the gates clang shut

Lyn Barlow

Insiders: Women's Experience of Prison
UNA PADEL and PRUE STEVENSON *Virago* £4.95

"LIKE WITH THE CONDITIONS at Holloway, I knew it would be no picnic, but I just didn't think they would treat human beings like that, anywhere."

Prisons, as presented by the media, are either those pits into which evil monsters are thrown to get their come-uppance, or grainy, grey rooftops where angry men hold cowed prison officers hostage. Little is heard of women's prisons, which are rarely adjudged newsworthy.

Insiders provides an opportunity to cut through the myths and misconceptions — and to see that which is usually kept hidden — by allowing us to hear from 11 women who've experienced life "inside". The accounts amount to a damning indictment of this country's penal system.

Women are far more likely to receive custodial sentences for minor offences like shoplifting, even for their first offence, than men, who are often only fined. The predominantly male judiciary views convicted women as guilty not only of the offence but of rebellion against the "feminine" role — in other words, of betrayal of their sex. More pragmatically, the circumstances which lead a woman into crime are seldom improved or

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alleviated by a custodial sentence. If anything, upon leaving prison a woman finds herself not only returning to the same hopelessly depressing conditions, but branded with the added stigma of having been "inside".

Recurring throughout these women's stories is their fear of being forced, through lack of money, support or alternatives, back into crime and on to the vicious treadmill.

The success of *Insiders* lies in the reality of the women's accounts. As someone who has experienced life inside several women's prisons, including Holloway and Styal, the book evoked all my old nightmares: the daunting, often terrifying arrival at the prison gates; the humiliation and isolation played upon ruthlessly by prison staff, who often view convicted women as either disturbed or evil. The descriptions of how the prison system hammers home inferiority were equally familiar to me. There is the quagmire of petty rules: in Styal women's prison you are woken at 7 a.m., made to fold your sheets and blankets into perfectly formed squares, wash, dress and sign in at the office all by 7.15 — then, 30 minutes later, made to make your bed again! With regimes such as this it is virtually impossible for women to avoid breaking one or another of the many pointless rules and regulations.

The punishments dished out for offences against prison discipline are incredibly heavy-handed — ranging from time in total isolation and being placed in a strip-cell to loss of privileges and remission. Before a prisoner can be judged and punished, she must first be found fit for adjudication by a prison doctor and, though it is now widely accepted that long periods of isolation and segregation can damage a person's mental health, prison doctors consistently find women fit for this kind of punishment. All too often prisoners are dismissed as malingerers or hypochondriacs, as Janet, who had trouble getting an inhaler writes: "The doctor's attitude was complete contempt. When I had my medical interview he said to me, 'You know what I think you should be in here for? Life'." These are just some of the ways in which prison doctors fly in the face of medical ethics.

Most people see prisons as places that will never touch their lives. It is hard to imagine that *you* may one day end up losing your freedom, independence and control. Yet the women in *Insiders* are not unusual. They are ordinary women who have fallen foul of the system and its perception of how we should behave. Ginger, who was transferred to a maximum security prison for her role as a perceived troublemaker, writes, "If you want things improving for yourself, and for others as well, don't accept things. People say that you can't change the system. If that was true we'd still be in Newgate on straw. So it does change. But it's got to be changed by the people they accuse of kicking the system."

If conditions within women's prisons are to improve — and they must — then it should not only be as a result of the efforts of prisoners who are brave enough to speak out, but with the support of the public at large. It is all too easy for socialists to campaign against human rights violations abroad and turn a deaf ear to the voices locked away behind our own prison walls. □

Lyn Barlow has been frequently imprisoned because of her activities in connection with the peace movement.

ARTS

Lauren lights up in *Bacall to Arms*

Webfooted friends

"Silly Symphonies", "Loony Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies". . .
JUDITH WILLIAMSON *renews her acquaintance with Porky Pig, Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny*

TO MANY PEOPLE Hollywood animation means the Disney cartoon — which, in its decline, aims increasingly at a child-audience that is deemed to require its viewing matter to be at once sickly and antiseptic. In the 1920s Disney had pioneered the *Silly Symphonies* series and produced the wild and raucous *Steamboat Willie* ('29) — animation's first sound picture. But as Disney — both the studio and its line drawing — grew more rigid after the high point of Grim Natwick's *Snow White* in '37, Warners took over as the studio whose animation not only retained but developed the vitality, whackiness and capacity for social and self-referential commentary that had characterised earlier animation works.

Warner's answer to *Silly Symphonies* was *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies*. In fact the *Symphonies*' composer, Carl Stalling, moved to Warners in 1936, the same year that Tex Avery and Frank Tashlin arrived. At this point some of the nuttiest and most knowing comic work began to be produced — partly because Warners, unlike Disney at that time, seem basically to have allowed their animators to be both as silly and as clever as they liked.

The result was a collection of work which still seems extraordinarily sharp in its ability to comment on the media in general, film in particular, and most of all, that relation between the generic stereotypes of a culture's imagery and the gestures and aspirations of its consumers.

These preoccupations will come as no surprise to anyone who knows Tashlin's later live action films. *The Girl Can't Help It* ('56) and *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* ('57) not only betray his animation background with their hilarious use of gags (men's glasses crack as Jayne Mansfield walks by) but employ a kind of *bricolage* of pop culture effects (use of "star" singers, spoofs of commercial breaks, etc.) very characteristic of Warner's animation in the previous decades. But unlike live action film, whose visual "depth" inevitably suggests realism, line animation is by its very nature superficial in form if not in content — its two-dimensionality fits ideally with the two-dimensionality of the screen.

This makes it perfectly suited to comment on the medium itself (it is no coincidence that many of Tashlin's gags are about sight) and the Warner cartoons play both with their own linear "reality" and with the film styles and genres of their day. In *Wholly Smoke* ('38) Porky Pig's cigarette smoke mimics animation by forming animal figures, and later, dancing cigarettes perform a Busby Berkeley chorus which from an aerial view spells out "NO SMOKING". Use of genre conventions blends again with social satire in *Plane Daffy* ('40) — where macho ducks from an army flying station try to resist the charms of a Nazi Mata Hari. The film is subversive through its very *silliness*: a stolen "secret" document reveals that "Hitler is a Stinker". Yet the punchline works rather more sophisticatedly, on two levels: when the Führer's aides voice the audience's own reaction to this non-revelation — "That's no secret!" — they pay with their lives. This film plays with an early image of television, as Hitler appears to Daffy and his seductress on a TV screen.

Tashlin's delight in popular forms continues in *Swooner Crooner* ('44) with Sinatra and Crosby as

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roosters whose crooning at first diverts hens from wartime egg production, then excites them to lay hundreds — an early ad for Music While You Work and, m[illegible] to the point, for various Warner theme tunes. All these cartoons are very much about Hollywood and in *Porky's Romance* ('37) the pig woos a temperamental starlet, whose coldness and glamour are exemplified by her modernist furniture. Tashlin has an eye for the surfaces of consumer culture and perhaps his most interesting piece is *Speaking of the Weather* ('37) in which the title song is performed by singers on the covers of *Radio Stars* magazines in a drugstore, while a story is enacted across the covers of the magazines themselves. A gangster from a crime comic robs a bank on the cover of a business mag, is put on trial by a law journal, sentenced to *LIFE*, escapes through a magazine called *Liberty* and runs through endless nature and geographic periodicals. What is especially interesting in this piece is the sense of shared culture, all the different magazines united by the popular song with even the mouths in a sandwich ad singing along like animated dentures. Alongside the knowingness — all media forms become interchangeable frames at the service of a narrative — is a jolliness and enjoyment which show a profound ease with mass culture, even while playfully jabbing at it.

The most irreverent and satirical of all Warner animators was Robert Clampett, whose work veers from the surreal to the wickedly parodic. In *The Big Snooze* ('46) the hunter who's supposed to be hunting Bugs Bunny tears up his Warner contract (references to Bette Davis remind us that such battles were very much in the public eye) because he's tired of chasing in and out of gags and wants a peaceful life snoozing. But the rabbit takes a can of "nightmare paint" and intrudes on his dreams by painting scenarios which clearly come out of *Hollywood's* can: being tied to a railway track (in this instance to be run over by hordes of rabbits) or — in another film cliché — finding himself dressed as a woman hustling on Hollywood and Vine. While *Porky in Whackyland* ('38) invents a surreal world peopled with characters who could only exist in animation (made pointedly vivid when an extinct Dodo takes a pencil, draws a door with the Warner Brothers' logo on and crawls under it) and *Corny Concerto* ('43) is a dig at Disney's *Fantasia* (made three years earlier), perhaps his best works are those which involve direct parodies of Warner films: *Bacall to Arms* ('46) and *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* ('37). The former spoofs Bacall and "Bogey Go-Cart" in *"To Have To Have To Have . . ."*; the latter parodies the gangster movies for which Warner was famed, and stars Duck Twacy as the private eye.

Merely describing these films doesn't do justice to their energy and elasticity of form. But what is so interesting is the combination of this formal freedom with their role in showing up the figures and conceits of the culture around them. If they were cynical rather than exuberant they would probably now be called postmodern. As it is, they give a sense of the *bounciness* of mass culture, in a more expansive and optimist era than our own. □

Along with animation from Britain and Eastern Europe, these Warner cartoons from the '30s and '40s will be shown in the Hampstead Everyman's Animation Festival which runs from 24-30 April. Phone 01-431 2240 for details. The Festival programme will be touring Britain in coming months. That's all folks!

ART

The cancer gnawed on

Brandon Taylor

Prints and Drawings of the Weimar Republic
Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
The "Golden" Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Republic
BÄRBEL SCHRADER and JÜRGEN SCHEBERA *Yale*
£25

THE EXTRAORDINARY WEALTH of artistic talent at work in the Weimar Republic must be partly responsible for the still pervasive myth that this constituted some kind of Golden Age, particularly the years between the stabilisation of the German mark in 1924 and the economic collapse of 1929. The theatre of Piscator and Brecht, the music of Berg and Weill, the satires of Grosz and Dix, the Bauhaus and the new architecture of Mendelsohn and Taut surely speak of a civilisation almost in advance of itself, triumphantly proclaiming the collapse of the old Germany and the awakenings of a purely modern culture.

But Weimar culture is more various and problematic than this. When the Republic was formed late in 1918 amidst war-weariness, incipient revolution and high confusion among the socialist parties, it is true that several very gifted artists, among them George Grosz, Otto Dix, Rudolf Schlichter, Georg Scholz and Kathe Kollwitz, identified more or less completely with the Spartacist group that shortly became the German Communist Party, and became vicious caricaturists of those militant centre and right-wing parties

"Bloated and insentient" faces in George Grosz's 1922 "Ah, Crazy World, Blessed Distortion Chamber"

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which murdered Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht and brought the possibility of a German revolution to an end. A host of younger artists identified with the Republic as an escape route from the old pre-war Germany, and gave us haunting images of a divided and contradictory society, accomplished solely but masterfully with the modest material of texture, line and tone.

Prints and Drawings of the Weimar Republic is an important exhibition and acts as a useful reminder of how spiteful and cutting these early satires were. The human face, especially, becomes the great motif of the early Weimar style. Whether bloated and insentient (Grosz), collapsed, decayed or completely shot away (Dix), puffed up with hubristic pride (Scholz) or lustful and duplicitous (Hubbuch), it is surely here that all the savagery and hatred of the Weimar caricaturists is contained. The human physiognomy becomes a magnetic centre. Partly a voyeuristic gaze at a much-despised "other", this is also a timely reminder of how class and political allegiance could (and still can) be read into facial style, accoutrement and gesture — or of how decisively these artists made it so.

But even by 1919 it had become obvious that major portions of the press and judiciary, not to mention the always active military machine, had survived the abdication of the Kaiser substantially intact, and that the chances of a durable left wing government in Germany were slim. The rocketing stagflation and increasing dependence on foreign aid in 1923-4 signified to many that the newly-born Republic was already living on borrowed time.

Thus the period of relative calm after the stabilisation of the economy in 1924 can only superficially be regarded as a fabled era. Certainly in the middle 1920s the graphic style of the most critical of the Weimar artists subsided, recovering "verism" and "new objectivity" around 1925 — and even classicism in the work of those such as Georg Schrimpf and Josef Scharl, both included in this exhibition, for whom expressionistic urgency was no longer relevant. Grosz and Dix towards the end of the '20s found fewer subjects beyond randomly selected character-types in the German city. In fact the economic prosperity of the later '20s seems to have helped keep hidden those fanatical right-wing groups, already active in 1919, who were merely waiting for an opportunity to re-kindle the flames of German "strength".

The exhibition wonderfully exposes a whole range of artists — some of them too little known, like Bernhard Kretzschmar and Karl Rössing, some, like Jeanne Mammen, virtually unseen — alongside fabulous small works by the likes of Max Beckmann and Christian Schad. But it gives no idea of the historical changes within the period — the catalogue essays are particularly uninspiring — and no sense of the strenuous oppositions within the totality of Weimar culture. To be quarrelsome, one would have to point out that proto-Nazi painters like Arthur Kampf and Adolf Ziegler, whom Hitler later admired, remain unmentioned. Yet critics and historians are very sensitive these days about the labelling of "period" exhibitions, particularly after the fiasco of the 1985 Royal Academy show *German Art in the Twentieth Century*, which left out the period of National Socialism altogether. This show skates on that same extremely thin ice.

The idea of glittering Weimar is treated very differently in Bärbel Schrader and Jürgen Schebera's **The "Golden" Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Period**; so much so that the relationship between art and its context is almost completely reversed. The book contains a great deal of interesting and relatively unknown material on the factional manoeuvrings within the Reichstag; about publishing, broadcasting and the entertainment industry during the period and, particularly, the popular taste which this industry was created to satisfy. Dances such as the Black Bottom and the Charleston, and the lesser jingoistic literature of nationalism and the old Germany, are uncovered here in a fairly sketchy but nevertheless valuable form. Within this texture, art occupies a minor but significant place as one cultural effort among many others. The book's illustrations make up for its somewhat lumpen prose style, although it must be admitted that it is not as comprehensive as John Willett's *The New Sobriety: Art and Politics in the Weimar Period*, published just ten years ago. But it does begin to look adequately at how German nationalism was the permanent cancer within the Weimar Republic, and at how the Republic could never have survived "because the interests of the imperialist monopolies remained basically the same as ever". One feels that this is the sober but accurate conclusion in which all studies of the period must terminate. □

DANCE

Personal is elliptical

Stephanie Jordan

April in Paris
The Place

1988 IS *Année de la danse*, declared France's Minister of Culture, François Leotard (the name is a coincidence), last January. With his announcement, the government machinery for the arts in France was set in motion for an abundance of projects and events.

Three hundred odd dancers will sell their wares along the banks of the Seine; there will be a dance train making a Tour de France with the top dance journalists aboard: there are plans for more dance on TV and film and a huge increase of 35 per cent in the dance budget. Our chance to savour this year's French enthusiasm is the *April in Paris* season at The Place Theatre and French Institute. In line with Place policy, it is the newest, most innovative work that has been chosen for show.

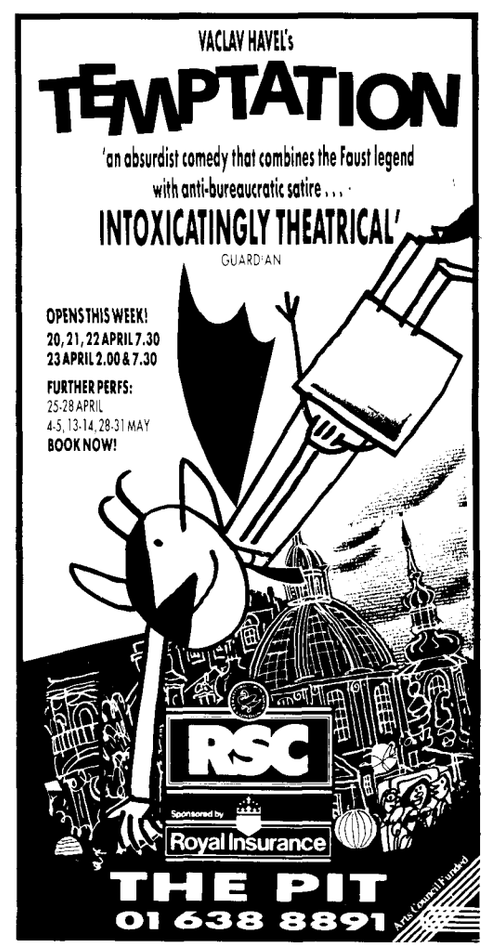
The French have responded rapidly to their dance boom. Their New Dance tradition is a little younger than ours — only a decade or so old, with the flood of new groups emerging in the 1980s — but it is already much better served financially. A major source of strength lies in the generosity towards the arts in the regions, money enough to pay new groups tolerably well as they tour, 17 choreographic centres providing excellent facilities and solid funding for resident companies (two more are to be created this year). This means that the first generation of radicals has been "implanted", richly resourced and given the leeway to make interesting failures as well as successes.

At least the French are not allowing "the artform of the age" to wither away under their noses. It's quite a different story here — where regional provision is minuscule and where artists outside the mainstream have been limping for years between projects, apprehensive from one season to the next.

In other respects, too, you can't escape the sense that the French mentality is very different from ours. Press packs, programmes and government dossiers project a hype around their festivals, titles and honours. And the competition consciousness! Every company you hear about has won a first prize from somewhere or other — there's even a Humour Prize and a Popularity Prize of the Public. Programme notes, meanwhile, are enigmatic; titles of works arcane; and the dance press favours the perfumed-poetic flourish.

The tone of the French work in the London season is as distinctive as the rhetoric that surrounds it. I can't say that I'm rivetted by individual groups as much as intrigued by what they have in common. Outstanding is the *manner* of performance. The dancers draw power from a certain rawness; they aren't branded by any of the traditional training vocabularies, nor does their work demand a detailed stylistic identity. Personal intensity is a prerequisite and the personal overrides the interpersonal. Dancers rarely connect with each other, working instead on the rapport between dancer and audience.

Choreographically, the season is far less inter-



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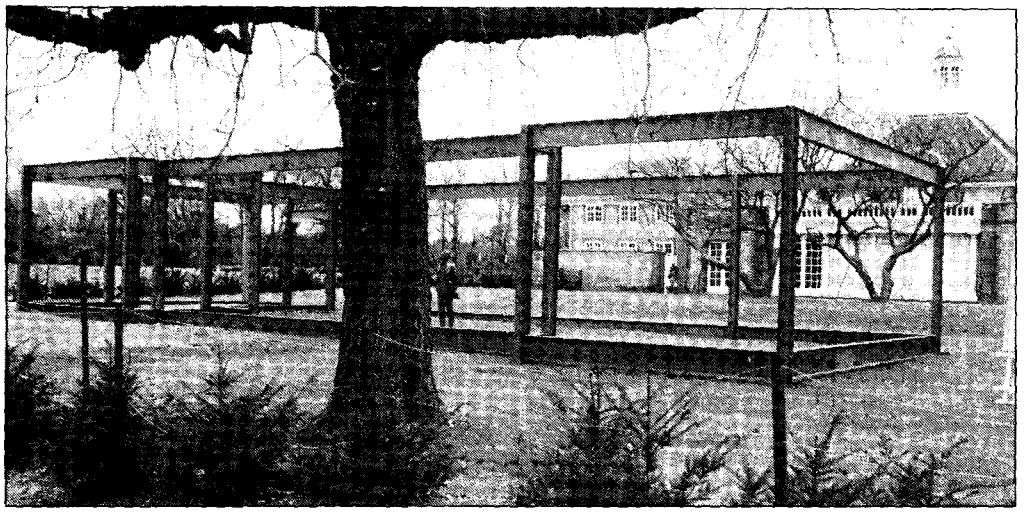
La P'tite Cie (above) perform "Quel foie de canard"

Right: No walls, *no action*. Kevin Atherton's "*One* Man Show" at the Serpentine Gallery

esting, the work often one-dimensional — and doggedly so, when British counterparts would probably consider a trick of theatre or energy shift as a holding device. La P'tite Cie, a group of three women — winners of that Humour Prize — stand out with their talent for aphorism and irony. This trio expresses its womanhood with more voluptousness than you ever see in British New Dance — a disarming coquetry is at work, while the dancers express strong sympathy with women who have been used and abused. In *Blue Belles Poules, chansons* of Piaf, Mistinguette and contemporaries evoke an era of masochism that's most deftly captured in one episode, where a spot-lit woman, to *La java bleue*, discloses a sequence of angry blue bruises — grim humour tactics to bring about a change of perception.

Mathilde Monnier of De Hexe is the most sophisticated choreographer of The Place series — unusual, too, in placing performance personae firmly in the service of theatrical construction. Some passages in *Je ne vois pas la femme cachée dans la forêt* put the accent firmly on dance invention; others attend to props and costumes; others are straight characterisation, focusing on two speaking actors, one little in stature, one large, strayed in from the clowning tradition. The diversity is appropriate to Monnier's fragmentary, bizarre vision of a natural world peopled with innocent lovers, birds and animals gradually overtaken by signs of civilization and a distorted 20th-century worldview, reinforced by Michael Nyman's music. This is more the kind of aesthetic that we're accustomed to, although a certain circus spirit seems strangely removed from Anglo-Saxon traditions.

Perhaps the April season could be the beginning of a regular exchange between the neighbouring countries. We still know so little about French dance, and they undoubtedly know even less about ours. □



ART

Piss artist

James Hall

Kevin Atherton
Serpentine Gallery

IF YOU PASS BY the Serpentine Gallery at the moment you may well think that they're building a new extension. Kevin Atherton's sculpture-cum-installation, "One Man Show", consists of a skeleton of steel girders that echoes the structure of the Gallery behind. Originally there was a hoarding to one side giving details of the construction firm that built it, the steel used and the sponsors, but the park authorities objected to such a prominent advertising hoarding and had it removed. Nevertheless, "One Man Show" still presents itself as a grandiose collaboration between art and industry. Atherton is a successful public sculptor who has received several commissions from British Rail (sponsors of the exhibition and catalogue), and, like Gilbert & George, he claims to make an "Art for All". But just what is this "Art", and who are these "All"?

Atherton says that the absence of walls in his structure means that his version of the gallery occupies a space which is that of the *real* world of "the man in the street". Everything that is normally hidden and suppressed is revealed; it becomes public sculpture in so far as privacy is rendered impossible. At the centre of the steel frame is a bronze figure, cast from life, of a man who visited the gallery last year, facing the road. The figure has the deadpan, impervious expression and stance of someone who might be having a piss in a crowded urinal — the kind of place where curiosity and (God forbid!) comparison are avoided at all costs because that would be to admit anxiety, inferiority, inequality. Atherton's "man in the street" is more the anonymous "man in the urinal". Public sculpture merges with public convenience.

Marcel Duchamp understood that the ultimate icon of modern, democratic society was the urinal — his "Fountain" consisted of just that. (Mussolini gave *orinali* and little else to the most inaccessible towns of southern Italy.) But as well as presenting urinals to the art world, Duchamp gave

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them the delights of multiple ironies. Just as all are equal before the public loo, so multiple ironies make all meanings equally possible — there is a free linguistic market. Atherton's title "One Man Show", is very open to multiple ironies. There is only one man *in* the show (the sculpture); it's Atherton's one-man show; it's anything but a one-man show, because there are all these sponsors, builders and curators involved . . . So opening up to the real world really means making a hall of mirrors that manufactures meanings ad infinitum: Man is Everyman, even Gentleman.

Atherton has several other works in London. "Upon Reflection" (Philip Noel Baker Peace Garden, Elthorne Park, Islington) consists of two deadpan "men in the urinal". One contemplates his reflection in a pond, the other contemplates a dissolving image of himself on the ground. At Brixton Station (BR) three bronze figures, one man and two women, cast directly from people who regularly use the station, stand listlessly on the platform. All in expressionless isolation: unlike Magritte's bowler-hatted bores, they have no secret associations, no frustrations to hide away. No wonder they put them on the Front Line.

Atherton has said that, "My work is not to do with supplanting what's there, it's to do with saying 'Here is the place, and this is what is happening'." This is a very undialectical materialism. Before taking up sculpture, he used to be a performance artist who used his body to draw attention to features of the architecture in which the performance took place. In "Some Features of Support" his naked silhouette was painted on all the supporting pillars in a warehouse. He then went round and scratched the paint away to expose the various cracks and holes in the pillars. Even if the painted silhouettes began life as identical caryatids "supporting" the ceiling, the variety of scratched marks did at least suggest some notion of individuality divorced from the architectural system.

"A Body of Work" (Langdon Park School, Byron Street, E14) is certainly Atherton's most dynamic work. It represents the sensation of the school-children rushing in and out of the playground during a 15-minute break. Feet, legs, knees, hands, and arms clutching bags emerge from and disappear into the walls. There is a confused awkwardness, a surreal sense of forms and worlds only partially glimpsed. A child's face is positioned on a wall between two barred windows, gazing up at the sky, but with only its nose and open mouth visible. The hidden eyes suggest (we hope) a world of private ecstasies. These part bodies, even if very fetishised, do at least inhabit a world where desire is possible.

In a previous review I mentioned a tendency for contemporary artists to pass the gauntlet not just of activism, but activity itself, to children. Atherton is no exception. His adult "man in the street" is reduced to zombie status, living in a world that is drained of time (why aren't any of the people on the Brixton platform impatient or looking at their watches?) and motion. It seems that adults cannot escape their destiny of materialism, and only their Spielberg-like children can hurtle through time and space. Just beyond the Serpentine is the Albert memorial. Atherton's brand of public art banishes from the adult world the faintest trace of a vital private life just as surely as did Victoria after Albert's death. □

NY THEATRE

Very little goes

Matt Wolf

If it's true that everything American reaches us eventually, risk-taking playwrights, directors and actors in Britain had better beware

WHAT GOOD IS an adventurous theatre if the press and public won't endorse it? Such is the question now being faced in New York, a city increasingly hostile to anything on-stage other than hyped British musicals and heart-tuggingly accessible and naturalistic plays.

Productions that deviate from the theatrical norm, or that lack above-the-title stars, always have difficulty surviving a climate that depends inordinately on a favourable press — and recently even the press has been pulling in the reins. If what's on offer in New York currently seems limited, this theatrical contraction merely reflects a greater contraction at large — the diminution of any serious popular and journalistic support for material that takes risks.

Reaction to *The Mahabharata* made the problem indelibly clear. Arriving at Brooklyn's Majestic Theater last October with two years of accolades behind it, the nine-hour adaptation no doubt expected a warm reception. Los Angeles critics had been kind during its earlier run there and Peter Brook's 1984 production of *La Tragedie de Carmen* had triumphantly re-opened the Vivian Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Centre after years of claims that the playhouse was "unplayable".

Instead, the reviews were mixed-to-poor and, more importantly, angry. How dare we be asked to sit for so long, listen to such a linguistic Babel, surrender ourselves to an epic poem outside the Western experience? the critiques seemed to imply. And heavyweights like the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker* and *New York Magazine* collectively marshalled against the production.

Audiences, unusually, decided to make up their own minds and *The Mahabharata* played to well over 90 per cent attendances during its three-month run. Elsewhere, however, what the press says goes and audiences warily stay away. Last winter, Gregory Mosher's new regime at Lincoln Centre took an acknowledged chance by mounting the New York premiere of Wole Soyinka's 1975 *Death and the King's Horseman*, a Lorca-esque drama of ritual and retribution based on an event in Yoruban history. As fortune would have it, the Nigerian playwright had just received the Nobel Prize for Literature — the event of a press agent's dreams, guaranteeing to the play attention it might not otherwise receive. But that attention, when it came, was the stuff of nightmare: the play was too confusing, too remote, lamented the press; it had too many programme notes. The production dribbled along for several months, playing to the theatre's dispirited subscribers, and Mosher and his management team re-thought their policy. This season, Lincoln Centre has been "house full' virtually every night. What's on offer? The Cole Porter musical *Anything Goes*.

On Broadway, no one expects to see Soyinka or *The Mahabharata* any more than you would find the veterans of Britain's subsidised sector, David Edgar or Edward Bond, say, cropping up in the West End. But what saddens in New York is the pressure which the construction of theatrical tastes puts on those subsidised venues that are inclined to be more daring.

Under previous managements, Lincoln Centre has been the home to a steady diet of classics staged either conventionally (*The Crucible* and *Danton's Death* in the 1960s) or unconventionally (*The Threepenny Opera* and *The Cherry Orchard* in the 1970s). But if *Anything Goes* is going to merit multiple extensions while *Death and the King's Horseman* is roundly chastised, what choice then does Mosher have? True, his up-coming 1988-9 season will begin with *Waiting for Godot* directed by Mike Nichols, but its cast virtually mitigates any risk involved. Steve Martin and Robin Williams will play Didi and Gogo.

A leading young New York actor recently told me a sobering story that illustrates how actors themselves lose out in this atmosphere. Eager to do Barrie Keeffe's *Barbarians*, he and another thespian comer took the play to the Manhattan Theatre Club, an off-Broadway venue that produced the New York premieres of British plays like Simon Gray's *Close of Play* and Catherine Hayes' *Skirmishes*. "Don't you have something lighter, funnier?" he was asked, before the project was abandoned. The circle of possibilities gets smaller and smaller.

Like Lincoln Centre before it, the Manhattan Theatre Club recently suffered a setback that may make it think twice when planning its next season. In December, the theatre opened a play called *The Day Room*, which should have been one of the banner events of the season. This was the first play by American novelist Don De Lillo, whose 1985 novel *White Noise* won an American Book Award for its coolly apocalyptic, offbeat tale of one Jack Gladney, chairman of the Department of Hitler Studies at the fictional College-on-the-Hill. In addition, the director, Michael Blakemore, was making his off-Broadway debut following back-to-back Broadway success with the New York productions of *Noises Off* and *Benefactors*.

But the style of the play sealed its own fate, much as Richard Nelson's *Principia Scriptoriae*, though far removed in content and tone, had done at the same theatre a year earlier. A surrealist comedy, *The Day Room* mixed self-conscious Pirandellian tricks with cosmic intimations, and what problems the play had were submerged in a summary dismissal of the evening's genre.

Brighter signs do, occasionally, appear. Peter Brook's Beckett-influenced staging of *The Cherry Orchard* finishes an acclaimed Brooklyn run on 10 April, and two new Broadway shows, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and *M Butterfly*, moved beyond the blandly well-meaning and well-made play. But, if the press is going to get prickly about anything that isn't *Les Miserables*, how can you blame people for remarks like the query I heard an irritated woman make last April after a Broadway matinée of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*:"I thought this was going to be a musical like that other *Les* show." □

Matt Wolf is the London theatre critic of The Associated Press and the Wall Street Journal (Europe).

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Calamity and quaint ideas

Bill Schwarz, London

A Secretary of State for Education who edits poetry anthologies and a Home Secretary who whiles away his leisure moments reading his old school-history books suggests that the received images of the Thatcherite High Command are in need of some revision. Baker's is a shameless attempt to retrieve a hopelessly anachronistic English identity. Hurd, as your editorial slightly draws to our attention (*NS*, April 8), has alighted upon the idea of citizenship.

This is indeed a curious move, for Tories are never more jumpy than when a whiff of Jacobinism hits the air. Sir Robert Peel — whose early career, those battered history-books remind us, turned upon his ambition to be "the great consolidator" — now becomes for Hurd the significant historical figure, out-shining even the revered but dreamy Disraeli. In one sense this is ludicrous: we need only think of the Peel family stockading the country home and importing carbines in the Reform crisis of 1831 to see how far removed we are from any meaningful idea of citizenship.

What it really betokens is the familier reflex of Tory authoritarianism: citizens, or more properly those who possess property and cultivation, in hand-to-hand combat with that most charged of Victorian spectres, the mob. It was Peel, Hurd boasts, who "founded the modern policing of London and Ireland". It was Hurd, the long-established Tory oligarch, we recall, whose most vivid early political experience derived from witnessing the pickets at Saltley in 1972. As Secretary of State for Northern Ireland he found the authoritarian dynamic already well-established.

Within his first week as Home Secretary, like some imperial explorer of an earlier imagination, Hurd found himself up against "the mob" — in this instance, black — in the streets of Handsworth, his security back-up having unaccountably vanished. The police station at Wapping and the extension of the apparatuses of the secret state follow with an unbending logic.

"The mob", he knows, is driven by "greed and the excitement of violence". Riots are a manifestation of "evil". This becomes the pretext for the Tory whiplash. Hurd is perfectly positioned to refine the coercive and administrative powers of the Thatcherite state. His was the final push in speeding through the Public Order Act in 1986.

In this sense, his new-found regard for Peel is not far-fetched. But it has precious little to do with "citizenship", whatever he and his co-consolidators, in their cultivated Oxbridge tones, now tell us about this odious and ugly regime which they serve so unequivocally.

Wrapping it up

William A. Paterson, Blackpool

Francis Wheen's comment on Mensa being a right-wing society is unfair (*NS* 8 April) and owes more to emotion than logic. Mensa aims to be politically neutral in its public stance and has declared no aims other than being a society for the intelligent.

However, it is certainly true that most of the leading lights in it are well to the right. In fact in a recent poll of members, out of those who bothered to reply (a low percentage) some 54 per cent supported the Conservative Party as against less than 10 per cent who were for Labour.

Underlying all this is the important point concerning the political leanings of highly intelligent individuals. The Mensa experience may only show that comfortable, well-off middle-class people who tend to be to the right also tend to be "joiners" and to enjoy (as they see it) both the distinction of being office holders and of being thought of as important within a peer group. As against this I suspect that left-wingers tend to be more independent in their thinking and more likely to follow the

correct Marxist view that they would not wish to belong to any club that would have them (Groucho, not Karl).

If politicians publicised their IQs as carefully as they promoted their other qualifications then I am sure that the advantage would be to the Labour Party. Certainly the right can boast no comparable intellects to such as the Webbs, Shaw, or Orwell.

On the political outlook of stupid people there can be little doubt, however. To quote an extremely intelligent person, the philosopher John Stuart Mill speaking in Parliament: "I never meant to say that the Conservatives are generally stupid — I meant to say that stupid people are generally Conservative". He then went on to warn that what he called "the stupid party" would always be extremely powerful because whatever its share of the ability of the community, it would always have nearly the whole of its stupidity.

Perhaps Francis Wheen would care to further this line of research.

The West Bank

Name and address supplied

I have been puzzling myself as to the motives of Francis Wheen in mentioning a letter received from a "Jew in Golders Green" (*NS* 25 March). It may surprise Francis Wheen that in fact there are many Jews, like myself, who believe in socialism and socialist ideals, but who do not follow the current line of thinking of both the left and the right wings, who seem to automatically condemn Israel and the Israelis at the least excuse.

The Arab propaganda machine has worked well in the West. At first in the universities, in the sixties and seventies, and now with investment money, the Arabs have persuaded many "free thinkers" into believing their "message" with the result that the only socialist-based Western culture in the Middle East is attacked from nearly all sides by sadly ignorant and blinkered people, who believe they are supporting a mass of people suffering under a tyrannical regime. While it is laudable that the left should be willing to take the side of the underdog, it does not automatically follow that the underdog is completely blameless.

For some reason these "free thinkers" ignore the history of the current situation as if it is just a minor irritation. They are pumped carefully edited television pictures purporting to show Israeli soldiers beating Palestinians while carefully avoiding the pictures of the Palestinians throwing stones, petrol bombs etc. Like in all war situations a small number of Israeli soldiers have gone "way over the top", and have also been duly punished for it. Just as the British soliders in Northern Ireland have also been, or have they? They ignore the decades of *real* suffering endured by Palestinian refugees in many of the Arab countries (conditions that are far worse than anything experienced on Israeli soil). They ignore the fact that Israel has taken in many thousands of Jews, and Gentiles, from countries all over the world, and particularly from adjoining Arab countries. They also ignore the fact that many Arabs live in peace and equality within Israel itself, and still retain their Arab identity.

It is obvious to me, and to any intelligent person, that the letter is a fake, which then poses the question: where did it come from? who actually wrote it? and why did Francis Wheen apparently take it seriously enough to comment? Perhaps the kindest comment I could make to Francis Wheen is that it is easy to choose to ignore both sides of an argument.

It is a great pity to see the *New Statesman* veer towards the sort of racism once thought to be the hallmark of right-wing Tory attitudes. It must give Mrs Thatcher great solace to see the younger people turning their indignation overseas, instead of concentrating on the atrocities she is commiting all around them.

14 times greater

Chris Hopson, SDP Local Election Campaign co-ordinator

The local election report (*NS*, 8 April) is both inaccurate and misleading.

You state tht "the SDP lost the only seat that it defended (Vale Royal)". This is inaccurate since the seat was contested by the SLD and not the SDP. The SLD candidate was in fact the former Chair of the local Liberals. No SDP candidate stood.

Your headline of "0.3 per cent for Owenites" is totally misleading because those figures are based on 36 three-way contests of which the SDP only fought two. If you take the SDP percentage in the two seats where we did fight,

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the figure is in fact 4.2 per cent — not a vast figure but 14 times greater than you suggest.

In future I hope you will give the SDP figure as being the percentage it gets in the seats where it fights. Any other way of portraying the results would seriously damage the impartiality of the valuable service your results report provides.

United Ireland

R. A. McCartney, Farnborough

Your Editorial on Northern Ireland ("Somebody's Son" 25 March) was dishonest. You stated that the *Fortnight*/UTV poll showed that "more Catholics would prefer to try devolution with power-sharing, than seek the unification of Ireland". This is true only if one maintains a rigid distinction between two of the categories offered in the poll, "United Ireland" and "Federal Ireland". The latter was Sinn Fein's policy up to 1982 and is obviously a form of unification. Add these together and they total 32 per cent, as opposed to 31 per cent for devolution with power-sharing.

Moreover, it is far from clear that Catholics and Protestants (only 17 per cent of whom backed devolution with power-sharing) agree on what policies a power-sharing administration would follow in practice. Would it take the tough line over religious discrimination which Catholics want? Would it support the harsher security policy many Protestants want? The previous period of devolved power-sharing was very short-lived, and gives little indication. If supporters from the two communities do indeed have different expectations of such an arrangement, then it is bound to be a failure in the long run.

Meanwhile, you have ignored the *Economist*'s opinion poll of British attitudes to Northern Ireland (26 March). This shows that 50 per cent want our troops withdrawn either immediately or within a pre-set time limit, while only 27 per cent want it to remain part of the UK (as against 19 per cent who support a united Ireland and 31 per cent who support an independent Northern Ireland). This is a remarkable result given that Republicans have been denied the opportunity to put their case and that the public have been subjected to intense Unionist propaganda over the last 20 years. Jack Saltman, executive current affairs producer at Thames TV, described as "a veteran of Northern Ireland and the Middle East" by the *Independent*, was quoted by them on 24 March as saying "The Government has . . . made the media go through a process of self-censorship, operated by the Independent Broadcasting Authority and BBC executives." It is also quite obvious failed politicians like Gerry Fitt have been given more opportunity to put their views than elected MPs like Gerry Adams.

Facts which are never mentioned about Northern Ireland include:

a) That while Protestants are a huge majority in the densely populated areas around Belfast, Catholics are the majority community over more than two-thirds of Northern Ireland.

b) That the Ulster Unionist Council and the Protestant UVF were organised throughout Ulster before partition, including three counties now in the Republic: Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan. In the last of these, Protestants were 30 per cent of the population, a much higher figure than in parts of Northern Ireland, and yet there has been no conflict there since partition. This gives good cause for believing that a united Ireland offers the best hope for a long-term, peaceful political solution.

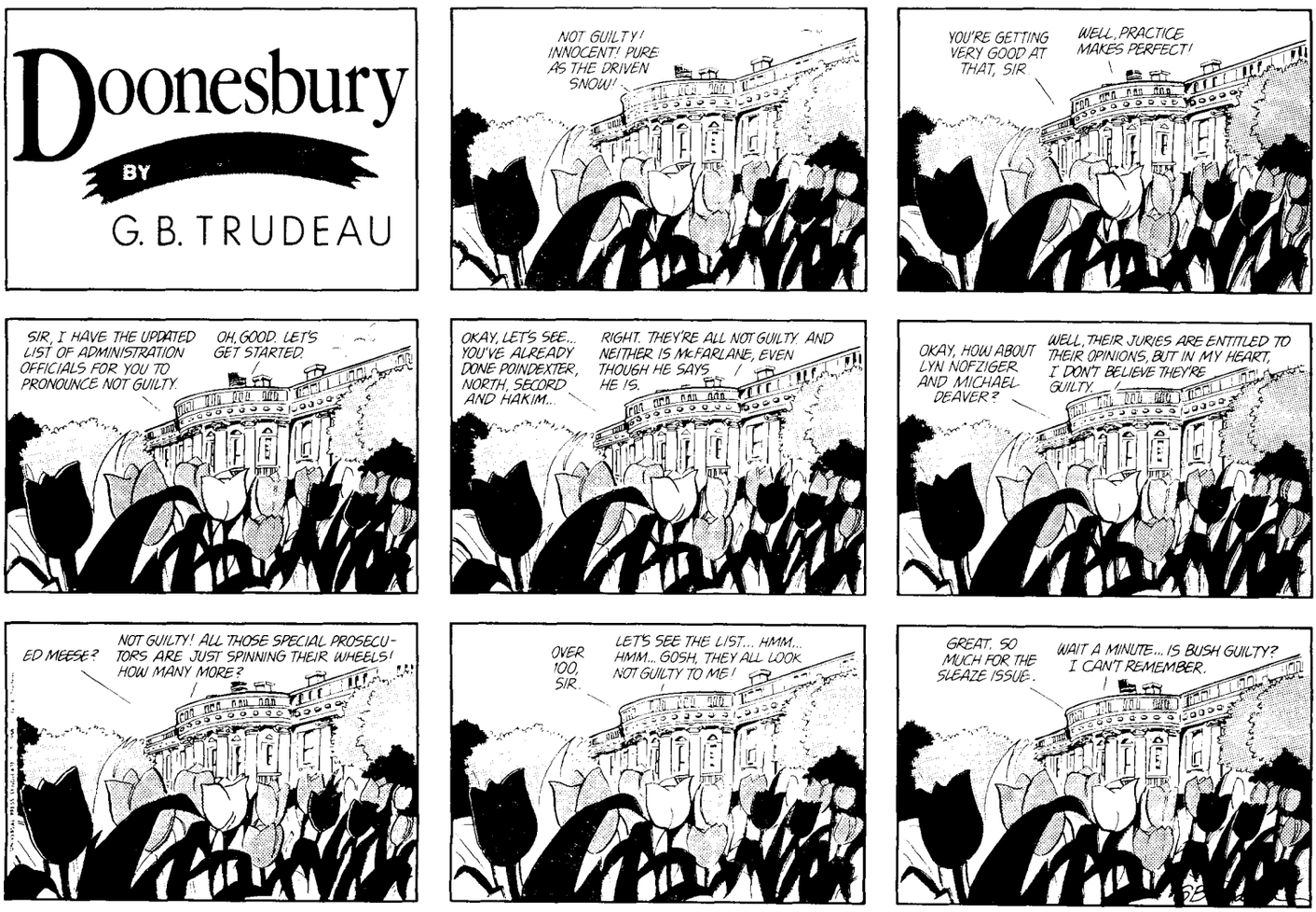
Beyond the pale

Emrys Deeley, Bristol

During the recent dark and threatening times for lesbian and gay people, the *New Statesman* has provided better and more sympathetic coverage than many publications. It is therefore all the more astonishing to discover in the *NS* the description "fat pouf" being described as "honest and reckless" and to find the generic term "turd-burglar" for gays. There must have been some editorial nodding, surely, to permit Carole Morin so to revel in her homophobia.

For the elementary education of your reviewer: homosexuality was not among Ronnie Kray's failings, nor is it a failing in anyone; Harry Daley was an unusual copper who, despite a lack of privilege and opportunity, displayed an erudition and sensitivity from which some of us might learn; and, among homophobic epithets, "turd-burglar" is about as offensive as you can get. Ms Morin should clean up her act or go write for the *Sun*.

If your pages demean me I shall cease to read them. And, please, no words about, "We didn't mean any offence." They won't wash.


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
NOT GUILTY! INNOCENT! PURE AS THE DRIVEN SNOW!
YOU'RE GETTING VERY GOOD AT THAT, SIR
WELL, PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!
SIR, I HAVE THE UPDATED LIST OF ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS FOR YOU TO PRONOUNCE NOT GUILTY.
OH, GOOD. LET'S GET STARTED.
OKAY, LET'S SEE... YOU'VE ALREADY DONE POINDEXTER, NORTH, SECORD AND HAKIM...
RIGHT. THEY'RE ALL NOT GUILTY. AND NEITHER IS McFARLANE, EVEN THOUGH HE SAYS HE IS.
OKAY, HOW ABOUT LYN NOFZIGER AND MICHAEL DEAVER?
WELL, THEIR JURIES ARE ENTITLED TO THEIR OPINIONS, BUT IN MY HEART, I DON'T BELIEVE THEY'RE GUILTY.
ED MEESE?
NOT GUILTY! ALL THOSE SPECIAL PROSECUTORS ARE JUST SPINNING THEIR WHEELS! HOW MANY MORE?
OVER 100, SIR.
LET'S SEE THE LIST... HMM... HMM... GOSH, THEY ALL LOOK NOT GUILTY TO ME!
GREAT. SO MUCH FOR THE SLEAZE ISSUE.
WAIT A MINUTE... IS BUSH GUILTY? I CAN'T REMEMBER.

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AGENDA

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

TUE 26 APRIL

CITY OF LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY

Speaker: **Bryan Gould MP**

'Labour and the City.'

Tuesday, 26 April at 6.15 p.m. in the Sir Christopher Wren 17 Paternoster Sq London EC4

All Welcome

FRI 29 APRIL

SHAW SOCIETY Barry Morse on "Shavings". Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Coffee 6.30 pm. Meeting 7 pm.

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Weekend competition

No 3022 **Set by Morgan le Fay**

When Geoffrey the queer-baiter Dickens MP announced last week that now he wants to exterminate the world's *witches*, he was either being a cynical, vulgar, dangerously unpleasant self-publicist (oh surely not: Ms de M) or a man of considerable courage. Could we please, my witches and warlocks, have incantations of revenge on this man, who would clearly bring back hanging for theft and the rack for religious unorthodoxy. Max 12 lines of verse by Wednesday 4 May.

No 3019 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

Book titles as astonishing as the recently published *Hitler's Defeat in Austria* by Gottfried-Karl Kinderman.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

Well . . . Now . . . Do I get the impression that you're all a bit overexcited? That three weeks' praise from Rosie and the child has fizzed your little heads like Babycham? I wonder how long it will take you to learn that people who rest on their laurels *get piles* — and, besides, write competition entries of quite unutterable banality. Having spent all morning at the shredding machine, I've enough cat litter for the rest of the year — including the remains of some 33 entries involving Edwina Currie. I'll concede there was a time when the mention of that name was sufficient to produce merry chortles, but the time has passed and I never want to hear it, or see it in print, again. To those below who've escaped my wrath, £2 per astonishing title. (And Duncan Campbell's bicycle clips, dear Bill, have not been forgotten; it's merely that they're locked inside a safe inside a safe and the silly boy can't find the keys.)

The History and Culture of Harlow New Town
CATHERINE BENSON

Playboy Diplomat: The Life of Sir Geoffrey Howe
GEORGE SIMMERS

Black Power at Westminster
PETER VEALE

A.J. Ayer and Samantha Fox: The Complete Dialogues
TIM HOPKINS

The Confessions of Kurt Waldheim
Son of Abelard
GERARD BENSON

Edith Sitwell as Jazz Trombonist
ALISON PRINCE

The Welfare State in the Year 2000
ROBERT BAIRD

Where I Went Wrong by Margaret Thatcher
NAOMI MARKS

Kinnock: The Years of Silence
C.J. ARTHUR

The Wit and Wisdom of Cecil Parkinson
Life and Works of Tony Blackburn
NOEL PETTY

Low-Profile Police Methods in the African Townships
The London Underground Northern Line Timetable
STEVE HORTON

1001 Easy Ways to Win NS *Competitions*
JOHN O'BYRNE

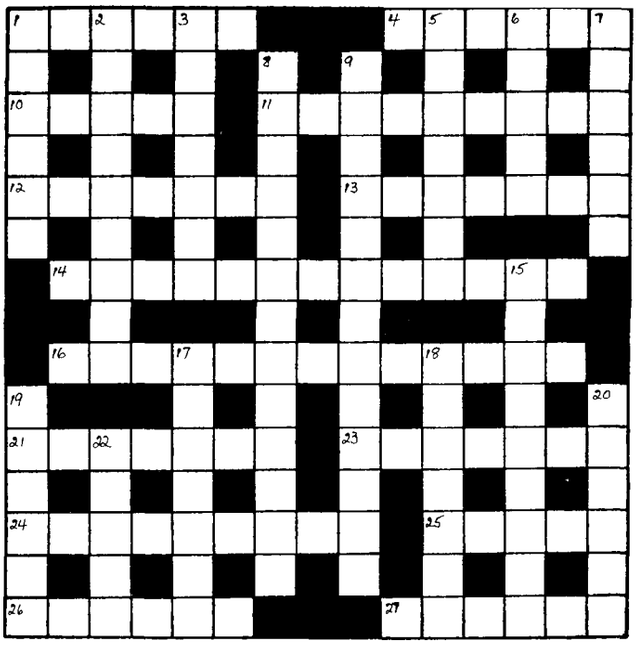
Johnson's Life of Boswell
JOCK WHITESIDE

John Anderton by God
MAUD GRACECHURCH

I Spied for Iceland
TONY JOSEPH

Weekend Crossword 1592

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1592, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 10 May.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

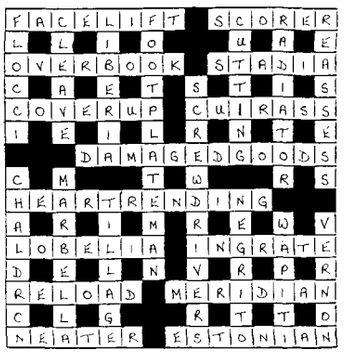
1. Find a soldier among the dead (6)
4. Graduate halfback is injured (6)
10. Young man who appears in a team I normally watch (5)
11. Strengthen what could have been freer once (9)
12. Of little importance, like a boundary in a practice game? (7)
13. The man embracing a woman is a foreigner (7)
14. The bally letters get mixed up and an a is needed to form a word like alphabetic (13)
16. Being kind, offer to take notice when a man is missing (13)
21. Setback for what used to be Britannia's place (7)
23. Spoil nothing although the wind is strong (7)
24. The place needs papering to start with (9)
25. One man holds a party for another (5)
26. Marsh formed by a second stretch of water (6)
27. Place for an academic ornithologist? (6)

DOWN

1. In an attempt to slim it shrinks and restricts (6)
2. Small body with many members (9)
3. Without a row the dog has to go wrong (7)
5. Two men on a plant (7)
6. Means of communication for a detective (5)
7. Dredge enclosed part of river? (6)
8. Soldier who is ill and regrets being transferred (13)
9. Pen allows hate to be used for the manufacture of armaments (6,7)
15. Superior person gives pound or penny to a city (5,4)
17. Where two kings appear in a performance (7)
18. This search in the British Museum discovers a city (7)
19. Hangings they may be spared (6)
20. The scientist put right into place for rubbish (6)
22. Sign which may include an article for the press (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1590



Prizewinners to 1590

J. Houghton (Leyland, Lancs.)
F. & N. Brouard (London SW4)
C. Kensit (Southsea, Hants.)

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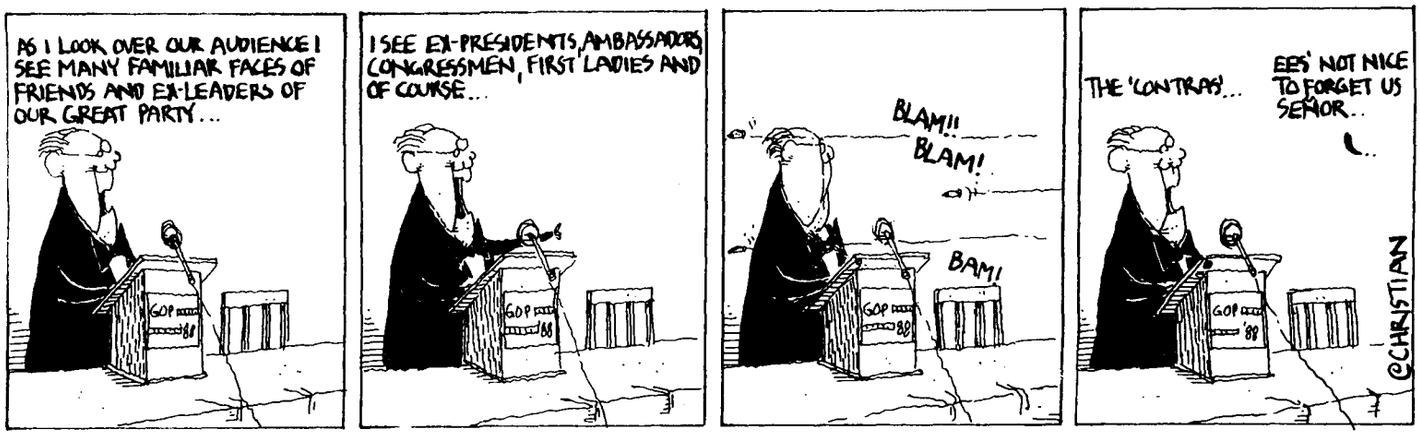

AS I LOOK OVER OUR AUDIENCE I SEE MANY FAMILIAR FACES OF FRIENDS AND EX-LEADERS OF OUR GREAT PARTY...
I SEE EX-PRESIDENTS, AMBASSADORS, CONGRESSMEN, FIRST LADIES AND OF COURSE...
BLAM!!
BLAM!
BAM!
THE 'CONTRAS'...
EES' NOT NICE TO FORGET US SENIOR..
GOP
©CHRISTIAN

Chess

THERE have been too many great games in the SWIFT World Cup for me to be ab' to give an adequate impression of all the brilliance on show in Brussels. But two sparklers from the 6th round, in quite contrasting styles, may give some idea. A Canadian barman in St John dubbed one of his concoctions a "Speelman Special". To get the flavour of this encounter, the mixture would have to be a heart-stopping, gut-searing, seething brew:

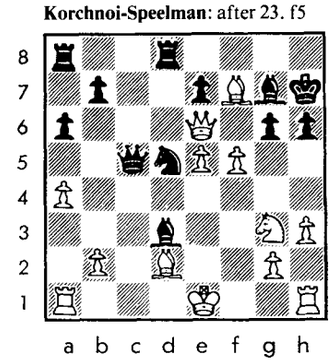
Korchnoi-Speelman, SWIFT World Cup 1988. Pirc-Modern.
1. d4 d6 2. e4 g6 3. Be3 Bg7 4. Nc3 a6 5. a4 Nf6 6. h3 0-0 7. Nf3 d5!? This is not usually good in the Pirc, and I am not convinced that the present case is an exception. The weaknesses created by the early a2-a4 and White's delay in developing his KB do at least give Black some encouragement. **8. e5 Ne4 9. Nxe4 dxe4 10. Ng5 c5** So if now 11. Nxe4 cxd4 12. Bxd4 Nc6 and Black gets his pawn back with a good game. **11. dxc5 Qc7 12. Qd5 h6 13. Nxe4 Rd8 14. Qa2** Why does Korchnoi retreat to this eccentric square rather than the natural b3, which would have defended c2? It puzzles me. **Bf5 15. Ng3 Bxc2 16. Bc4 Qa5+** Speelman succeeds in disturbing the White King, now that the shielding advance c2-c3 is no longer available. **17. Ke2 Nc6 18. Bxf7+ Kh7 19. f4** At this moment White's prospects seem rosy. He is making room for his own King to leave the centre, is set to assault g6 — and 2 pawns up. **Nb4 20. Qe6 Nd5 21. Bd2 Bd3+!** A vital point — 22. Kxd3? Nxf4+ — that holds the White K in the centre. **22. Ke1 Qxc5 23. f5** *See diagram.* **Ne3! 24. Qxg6+** There is no time to interpolate 24. Rc1 as Black can say it all with checks: 24 . . . Nxg2+ 25. Kd1 Be2+! 26. Kxe2 Rxd2+! 27. Kxd2 Rd8+ 28. Ke2 Nf4+ 29. Kf3 Rd3+ 30. Kg4 Rxg3+! and mates. **Kh8 25. Nh5 Nxf5!** Amazingly this not only stops mate on g7, but also introduces a decisive threat of . . . Qxe5+. White cannot defend with 26. Bf4 because of 26 . . . Qb4+ 27. Kf2 Qxb2+ etc. **26. Nxg7 Qxe5+ 27. Kf2 Qd4+ 28. Ke1 Qh4+!** Would you have seen that Black has anything better here than a draw by repetition with 28 . . . Qe5+? **29. g3 Qe4+ 30. Kf2 Qe2+ 31. Kg1 Be4 0-1.** Why does White resign when he can stop the mate with 32. Rh2? But then comes 32 . . . Qxh2+! 33. Kxh2 Rxd2+ 34. Kg1 Rg2+ 35. Kf1 Ne3+ and Black wins both the Qg6 and Ra1.

Korchnoi, ungracious in shell-shock, called it "a silly game". Nobody else shared that opinion. Yet on the following day John Nunn revealed that the gem was dreadfully flawed. Korchnoi had missed a move that would have killed all Speelman's play stone dead — **16. Qc4!** Bf5 (what else?) 17. Nxf5 gxf5 18. f4, and Black is busted.

Karpov does not get involved in such rough stuff. He doesn't like to have his pulse-rate raised too much. The watchwords are control and constriction. Against Timman on that same day, 5 April, he sacrificed his Queen. It was a sacrifice in positional mode, followed by unhurried exploitation:

Karpov-Timman, SWIFT World Cup 1988. Queen's Gambit Accepted.
1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 Nf6 4. e5 Nd5 5. Bxc4 Nb6 6. Bd3 Nc6 7. Ne2 Bg4 8. Be3 Interesting opening strategy, which Karpov seems to have borrowed from the game Korchnoi-Hübner, Tilburg 1987. 8. f3 has been played before, but Karpov thinks that d4 is not so weak and the two bishops are worth having. **Bxe2 9. Bxe2 Qd7 10. Nc3 0-0-0 11. a4 a6** Not 11 . . . Nxd4? 12. a5. **12 a5 Nd5 13. Bf3 Ndb4** 13 . . . Ncb4 would be more solid, but it takes the heat off d4. Of course 13 . . . e6? loses to 14. Nxd5 exd5? 15. Bg4 **14. e6! Qxe6 15. d5 Qe5 16. 0-0 e6 17. dxc6! Rxd1 18. cxb7+ Kb8 19. Rfxd1 Bc5** 19 . . . Bd6 might be a better defence, though the pawn on b7 will always be a bone in Black's throat. **20. Bxc5 Qxc5 21. Rd7 f5 22. Rad1 Nc6 23. Na4 Qb5 24. Rc1! Qxa4** Timman should have tried 24 . . . Ne5! 25. Rdxc7 Nxf3+ 26. gxf3 Qxa5! (not 26 . . . Qxa4? 27. Rc8+ Kxb7 28. R1c7 mate!) and now after either 27. Rc8+ Kxb7 28. Rxh8 or 27. Nc5 Qxc7 28. Nxa6+ Kxb7 29. Rxc7+ Kxa6 30. Rxg7 White has winning chances, but it's still problematic. **25. Rxc6** Karpov rejected 25. Bxc6 because after 25 . . . Qxa5 26. Rcd1 Ka7 the possibility of a back row mate on e1 prevents him from playing Rd8. **Qxa5 26. Rxe6 Ka7 27. g3 g5 28. Rxh7! Rb8 29. h3 g4** Unfortunately for Timman 29 . . . Rxb7 30. Bxb7 Kxb7 leads Black straight to a lost ending after 31. Ree7. **30. hxg4 fxg4 31. Bg2 Qa1 32. Kh2 Qxb2 33. Rhh6 Qa2 34. Ref6 c5 35. Rf4** Note how counterplay is squashed: 35 . . . c4 36. Bd5. **Qd2 36. Bf1! Rxb7 37. Rxa6+ Kb8 38. Rf8+ Kc7 39. Bg2! Qd7** Just managing to meet both the threats of Rf7+ and Rc6+. But Karpov winds up with a subtle geometrical manoeuvre. **40. Rh8 c4 41. Be4! 0-1.** No defence against 42. Rh7.

Korchnoi-Speelman: after 23. f5



George Botterill

New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ
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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed.
(Postcards please.)

☐ My daughter, wanting to obtain a donor card, asked at the local post office, where she was advised to try the local chemist. When asking the assistant if they had donor cards, she was told no. As she was leaving the shop, the assistant called through the shop, "We do Access and Visa". — *Evening Standard*
(Russell Holmes)

☐ "I think the new population influx has a lot to offer the village," said Larry, 32, also proprietor of Flairpool's only wine bar, The Huntsman's Return. "Times change and you can't always live in the past. Anyway, I've got loads of money so why should I care?" — *South Bucks Star* (R.A. Lee)

☐ Richard Branson wrote to the Prime Minister in March last year suggesting a "sweep your own frontage" law, and received the reply that it might be difficult on a windy day to know whose litter it was. — *The Times*
(Leonard Cox)

☐ Need a tax expert? Look no further than Gordon Brown, Labour's talented shadow Treasury secretary. In the cheekiest Commons question of last week he asked how much tax a man earning £1m a year would pay if he had a £30,000 mortgage, invested £40,000 in a business expansion scheme, £800,000 in an enterprise zone, £10,000 in forestry and paid £195,000 into his pension fund. The sheepish answer from Norman Lamont, the Treasury minister? "Liability to income tax in 1987/88 would be nil." — *Sunday Times*
(W. Pugh)

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AMBASSADOR ... Big Issue, London

ICA

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri

ICA Talks announces

Cultural Politics

A series of talks on radical theory and cultural practice.

10 May, 7.30
Colin MacCabe, Alan Sinfield and Cora Kaplan on cultural materialism

17 May, 7.30
Sara Maitland, David Hornbrook and Damien Whitmore on education for critical literacy

26 May, 7.30
Geoffrey Robertson QC, Maureen Oliver, Madeleine Colvin and Jeffrey Weeks on Clause 28 and the Arts

Further talks in the series are planned for June, details from ICA box office.
Cultural Politics is sponsored by Manchester University Press

Tickets £2.50.

Also in May
18 May, 7.30
The Honey Ant Dreaming
Australian artist Tim Johnson discusses aboriginal arts with ethnologist Howard Morphy and ICA curator Iwona Blazwick

Tickets £2.50.

14 May, 11.30
The Big Idea: Large Scale Events in the Making
A day of workshops on large scale events in theatre, visual arts and performance. Participants include the Bow Gamelan Ensemble and Hilary Westlake of Lumiere and Son

Tickets £5.00 (concs £4.00)

21 May, 12.00
The Designer World: Women at the Cutting Edge
A day conference on design and feminism

Tickets £5.00 (concs £4.00)

In the lunchtime series Guardian Conversations
New Writers from North America

5 May, 1.00
Kaye Gibbons in conversation with writer Jeanette Winterson

26 May, 1.00
Michael Chabon with Cosmopolitan fiction editor Emma Dally.

2 June, 1.00
Janice Eidus talks on her novel, Faithful Rebecca.
'. . . an auspicious debut . . .' New York Newsday

Tickets £1.50.

Also at the ICA in May:

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Muteki-Sha Dance Company (Japan)
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ANTIPODES
ANTIPODES

Running until the autumn, the ICA is holding a six month season of new work from Australia, including the May exhibitions; the presentation of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, in association with the South Bank Board in May; The Even Orchestra in June; a season of film and video in September; plus talks and conferences.

Further programme information available from ICA box office.

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Become a member of the ICA. Present this advertisement at the ICA Box office for a £1.00 discount on annual membership.
This offer is valid until 31 July 1988.

Entrance to the ICA is by day or annual membership, which gives entrance to galleries, bookshop, café and bar. Day membership is 75p; annual membership is £12.00 single, £15.00 dual, and includes such benefits as discounts on tickets and ICA publications, signed books of the month offers, monthly mailings and more.

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